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OLD TESTAMENT REVISION:

A Handbook for English Readers.

ALEXANDER^{✓BY} ROBERTS, D.D.,

*Professor of Humanity, St. Andrews, and Member of New Testament
Company of Revisers;*

AUTHOR OF "COMPANION TO THE REVISED VERSION OF THE
ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT," ETC.

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PREFACE.

IT seems desirable, in view of the approaching publication of the Revised Version of the Old Testament, to furnish, in popular form, some information on interesting and important points connected with that portion of Scripture. This I have endeavoured to do in the following little volume. From the nature of the case, this work has been constructed on totally different lines from my "Companion to the Revised Version of the New Testament." Comparatively little, for instance, requires to be said, or, indeed, can be said, respecting the text and manuscripts of the Old Testament—points which call for the utmost care in dealing with the New

Testament. My object in the present work has been to present, in easy, untechnical language, a considerable amount of general information, which may enable ordinary English readers to peruse with greater interest and intelligence the Scriptures of the Old Testament, when these are set before them in the Revised Version.

I willingly acknowledge that I have learned much on the subject of the Old Testament from so-called rationalistic writers. And I trust I am willing to learn more ; for whatever commends itself as *true* ought to be welcomed from any and every quarter. At the same time, I am constrained to say that a tone of dogmatism, and a tendency to one-sidedness, may as plainly be discovered in the writers referred to, as among those who belong to the strictly "orthodox" class. The candid seeker after truth must be on his guard in dealing with the statements of extreme men on the one side as well as on the other.

I have embodied in the following pages a number of what appear to me improved translations of Old Testament passages, without having the least idea whether or not these have been adopted by the Revision Company. Multitudes of additional emendations will, of course, appear in the Revised Version, although it is to be hoped that the work will not be marked by that amount of minute and really needless change which is one of the greatest weaknesses of the Revised New Testament.

Should my little book fall into the hands of any Biblical scholars, I would respectfully solicit their attention to the argument in behalf of the habitual use of the Greek language by Christ, as set forth in Chapter IX. My apology for taking another opportunity of handling this subject is simply that I believe it to be one of the most interesting and important of Biblical questions. Indeed, should the view for which I plead as to the language generally used by Christ be at last accepted,

a revolution must, to a considerable extent, take place in the science of Biblical criticism.

To prevent all possible misunderstanding, it may be well to add that, though the sheets of the Revised Old Testament have, from time to time, been sent to me, I am not, now that my book has been printed, acquainted with a single change of rendering which the Revisers have adopted.

A. R.

UNIVERSITY, ST. ANDREWS,

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CHAPTER I.

LANGUAGE AND CONTENTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

ALL the canonical books of the Old Testament are written throughout in the Hebrew language, with the exception of a very few passages to be afterwards noticed.

The language thus called "Hebrew" has been supposed by not a few eminent scholars to have acquired its name from Eber, or rather (with a weak guttural sound) Heber, who is referred to in Genesis x. 21, 24. But, far more probably, the appellation was derived from a word meaning "beyond," or "on the further side," and was applied to Abraham and the dependants who accompanied him, because they had passed over from *the other side* of the great river Euphrates, on their way from Mesopotamia to Canaan. The name thus given them by the people among whom they came to settle, was adopted by the immigrants themselves, and was afterwards used by them to denote the external relation in which they stood to other nations.

Hebrew is a member of what is known as the Shemitic, or Semitic, family of languages. The term "Shemitic" has been applied to them, because, according to the genealogies contained in the Book of Genesis, most of the nations who speak them are descended from Shem, the eldest son of Noah. This widely spread group of human tongues falls into three main divisions,—the Aramaic, or northern dialect, the Hebrew, or central dialect, and the Arabic, or southern dialect. With the Aramaic are connected the Syriac, which, in a corrupted form, is still spoken by the Druses and Maronites at the present day, and the cuneiform inscriptions which have been found in Babylonia and Assyria. With the Hebrew there are connected the Phœnician, Samaritan, and Punic, of which only a few remains are now possessed. With the Arabic, again, are connected the ancient Æthiopic, and some kindred forms of speech; while the languages now spoken in Malta and Abyssinia exhibit it in a more or less corrupted form; and in its comparatively pure state Arabic is still used by a vast number of the inhabitants of our globe.

The great characteristic of Semitic speech is the tri-literal composition of its words. Almost all the verbal forms consist of three letters—neither less nor more. And these letters are all *consonants*, the vowels being left unwritten, as of comparatively

little consequence. This constitutes one marked difference between Semitic languages, like the Hebrew or Arabic, and Indo-European languages, such as Sanscrit, Greek, German, or English. In the Indo-European languages, we find that, from the earliest times, the consonants were often variable, while the vowels must be regarded as having been deemed at least equally important. But in Hebrew, as long as the language was a living one, and even for ages afterwards, the vowels remained unwritten. The form thus presented by the words may be exhibited to one unacquainted with the original, by means of English characters, reading these, of course, from right to left, as is the case in all the Semitic languages. Thus, the three consonants L T K stood for *katal*, "he killed," and the three consonants V SH Y, for *yashav*, "he sat." But the first of these examples might also receive such a vowel punctuation as changed the word into *kotel*, "one who kills," and the second might be so pointed as to change the preterite into the future—*yeshev*, "he shall sit." Many other words, as will afterwards be noticed, vary in sense much more than these, according to the vowel pointing which is adopted.

It follows at once from what has been said, that there must occasionally be room for difference of opinion as to the exact meaning of the Hebrew text.

We shall have occasion in a subsequent chapter to consider more particularly the value which should be assigned to the traditional system of vowel punctuation followed in our ordinary Hebrew Bibles ; but, in the meantime, an example may be given of the ambiguity which sometimes arises from the fact that the vowels were not originally written along with the consonants. For an illustration, let us turn to 1 Kings xvii. 6. We there read in our common version respecting Elijah, that “the *ravens* brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening ; and he drank of the brook.” The word here translated “ravens” undoubtedly has that meaning as traditionally pointed, but, with other vowels, it may mean either “Arabians” or “inhabitants of Oreb.” And there have not been wanting high authorities who have preferred one or other of these renderings to that of “ravens.” The following are the remarks of Dr. Kitto on the subject. “It is certain,” he says, “that any person finding the word without vowels, and left to find the meaning from the context, would not for a moment think of *ravens*, but would fix on one of the other alternatives. As to the Orebim, there was a rock called Oreb (Judges vii. 25), the inhabitants near which may be supposed to have been so called ; but this was on the other side of the Jordan. And with reference to the

Arabians, nothing seems to us more likely than that encampments of Arabs (who still intrude their tents into the border or waste lands of settled countries) would in this season of drought have been formed on the banks of the brook Cherith, and (knowing the scarcity of water elsewhere) would have remained there as long as it afforded water to them—that is, as long as Elijah remained. They were also, both from their conditions and habits, the very persons in whose keeping the secret of his retreat was most safe—far more so than it would have been with any townsmen, subjects of Ahab. They were the least likely to know his person, and that he was sought after by the king; and if they did know, they were less than any other persons open to the inducements the king could offer, or the fears he could impose. If, however, the reader prefers to hold that the well-disposed inhabitants of a town called Oreb, or Orbo, were the parties by whom Elijah was supplied with food, there are good authorities to support him in that conclusion, and to show that a small town of that name did exist near at hand.

“As to the *ravens*, we can easily conceive that, in an age when the love of the marvellous had become absolutely a mania among the Jews, they would by choice select of many interpretations the most unlikely and wonderful; and we feel as assured

that, having the present alternatives before them, they would, from their instinctive marvellousness,* fix on *this*, as we are that this is the very one which, of all the others, a man of plain understanding would reject. Indeed, the opportunity of determining the sense to *ravens* must to a Jew have been too delicious to be neglected, since it afforded excellent opportunities of amplifying and illustrating the matter in his own peculiar vein.

“The difficulties attending the common opinion have greatly embarrassed the commentators. Of this a sample may be given from the *Synopsis Criticorum* of the elaborate Poole: ‘Unquestionably they brought meat *dressed*, not raw (Gen. ix. 1). You may ask, *Where did the ravens get it?* Ans. 1. From the kitchen of King Ahab, or of Jehoshaphat. 2. Or, it was prepared for him by some of the seven thousand to whom God communicated the secret (1 Kings xix. 8). Or, 3. The *angels* perhaps exposed the meat in some certain place, whence the ravens brought it. Or, 4. He could provide, who gave them such a commission, and who could effect this in a thousand ways. God prepared a table for His servant in the utmost penury. He did not take care that *wine* should be brought him.’ Hales (who

* So in writer, meaning, no doubt, “tendency to the marvellous.”

takes the view that the inhabitants of a place called Oreb are denoted) properly remarks on this: 'Such a comment, put out of a learned language into plain English, can only excite a smile, mingled with regret that literary talent should be so wasted or misemployed on idle speculation.' We should add that the Jewish interpreters have not only suggested the alternatives mentioned by Poole, but several others, among which one is, that the meat was a portion of that which Obadiah provided for the prophets whom he concealed in the caverns." *

To my mind there seems a great deal of force in these remarks. It is true that the traditional rendering has the weighty suffrage of Josephus, and of the ancient versions, in its favour. But notwithstanding this, and taking all things into account, I am hardly prepared to adopt the very decided language of a recent writer when he says, "A vast deal of ingenuity has been devoted to explaining away Elijah's ravens. . . . There is no escape from the plain meaning of the words—occurring as they do twice in a passage otherwise displaying no tinge of the marvellous—or from the unanimity of all the Hebrew MSS. of all the ancient versions, and of Josephus."† The truth is, that, in all such cases, the context is our

* *Pictorial Bible, in loc.*

† Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. Elijah.

only safe guide, and if that fails us, nothing *certain* can be said.* This may be made pretty plain by an illustration in English. If these three consonants, M D L, stood by themselves, without any accompanying vowels, they might be understood to express any one of the following senses, *medal*, *model*, *modal*, *meddle*, *middle*, *muddle*, or perhaps to refer to a place bearing the name of *Mydal* or *Mydol*. The sentence, however, in which the word occurred, taken in connexion with other known circumstances, would probably render clear the meaning which was to be attached to the word. Otherwise, no dogmatic opinion whatever could be formed upon the subject; and this should be borne in mind in reading any translation of the Old Testament.

Judging by the varied and extensive literature which we still possess in the books of the Old Testament, the Hebrew language was always marked by a very limited vocabulary. It did not contain, so far as we know, over six thousand words, and these have been reduced to about five hundred roots.† Hence one word has often a great variety of

* Of course there is a presumption in favour of the traditional vowel pointing; see this point further touched upon in chap. vii.

† Max Müller's *Lectures on Language* (1st ser.), p. 297.

meanings, and these apparently very far separated from each other. Thus, the one word *Tor*, which, in its fundamental signification, seems to imply "arrangement," also signifies "a way of acting," "a turn," "a string of pearls," "a turtle-dove," and "an ox." Again, the word *Goor*, as denoting "a lion's whelp," may be regarded as having been derived from the sound which the animal utters, but it is certainly not easy to understand how a verb *Goor*, with exactly the same letters, came to mean not only "to fear," but "to dwell," "to assemble," "to go abroad," "to worship."* As M. Renan has observed, the one root *Room*, which expresses the idea of *height*, has given rise to the following related, yet widely divergent, meanings: *to rise, to strengthen, to lift up, to build a house, to educate, to place in safety, to render conqueror, to extol, to speak loud, to levy a tax, to raise hurriedly, to offer sacrifice, to cherish pride, a hill, a heap, haughtiness, a sacrifice, a gift*. The same writer remarks that the single root *Koom* expresses, by means of its different verbal and noun forms, the following variety of meanings: *to rise, to exist, to appear, to increase, to dwell, to persevere, to approve, to walk gracefully, to live, to preserve alive, to verify, to arrange, to construct, to rebuild, to revolt, to lift up, to establish, stature, haughtiness, up-standing*,

* Canon Farrar, *Language and Languages*, p. 197.

*substance, thing, place, dwelling, rebellion, enemy, means of resistance, adversary.**

It is obvious that a language like the Hebrew, which thus expresses such widely separated meanings by modifications of one and the same root, cannot fail to be of a highly metaphorical character. And such, accordingly, we find to be the case. This appears not only in the widely ramified senses attached to the same word, as exemplified above, but in the character of the literature generally. The boldest metaphors are constantly employed. God is spoken of as "a Sun and a Shield" (Ps. lxxxiv. 11), and as "a Rock" (Ps. xviii. 31, etc.), as well as "a Father" (Isa. lxiii. 16, etc.). Wicked men are described as "wolves" (Zeph. iii. 3), as "bulls" (Ps. xxii. 12), and as "dogs" (Isa. lvi. 10, etc.). To be prosperous is to have one's "horn exalted" (Ps. xcii. 10, etc.), and to be afflicted is to "melt away" (Job vi. 14), while to be humble is to have "low eyes" (Job xxii. 29). The Church is God's "vineyard" (Isa. v. 1), and the care which He expends upon it is set forth under the figure of "a vine," at great length, and with much beauty (Ps. lxxx. 8 ff). To pardon sin was to "cover it" (2 Chron. xxx. 18); to be angry was to have the "nose made hot" (Exod. xxxii. 10, etc.); to

* *Histoire des Langues Sémitiques*, v. 131.

be patient, or forbearing, was to have the "nose long" (Exod. xxxiv. 6, etc.); to be irritable, or hasty, was to be "short of nose" (Prov. xiv. 17); and so in regard to a multitude of other metaphorical expressions.*

The Semitic languages, as a whole, approach much more nearly to the primitive type of human speech than do those of the Indo-European or Aryan family; and among the Semitic tongues, so far as we can trace them at the present day, Hebrew exhibits by far the most ancient form.† Not so very long ago, indeed, Hebrew was generally regarded as having been the original language of mankind, and as such was supposed to have been spoken in Paradise. The vagaries of learned men on these points have been most amusing. Thus, we are told that Goropius, in a book published

* Figurative expressions like the above are found at the present day in languages which are still in a comparatively undeveloped state. Thus, says Canon Farrar, "To give but one instance: the king of Bokhara informed Dr. Wolff that he had put to death poor Lieut. Connolly because 'he had had a long nose,' by which he simply meant in an expressive manner to imply that he was irritable or proud." (*Lang. and Langs.*, p. 360.) It will be noticed that a different meaning belongs to this expression in Hebrew.

† Hertzog's *Real-Encyclopädie*, art. Hebräische Sprache. Winer says of the Hebrew, that it is "one of the oldest languages of which we have any knowledge." (R. W. B., art. Sprache.)

at Antwerp in 1580, tried to prove that Dutch had the honour of having been the primitive tongue. Another writer, named Kempe, seriously maintained that God spoke in Swedish to our first parents, that Adam answered Him in Danish, and that the serpent addressed Eve in the French language! * Others have strenuously argued that Basque, with all its strange peculiarities, was really the language of Paradise; but the claims of Hebrew to that distinction were generally allowed to be pre-eminent, until conclusively disproved by the researches of comparative philology. The science of language, which is scarcely yet a century old, among other great achievements, has clearly proved that no existing tongue—not even Sanscrit—can be accepted as the original tongue spoken by mankind. That language will in all probability never be discovered, although it may to some extent be conjecturally built up by bringing together roots which are ultimately found to be common to all languages.

But though the claim once put forward for Hebrew as having been man's primitive speech is now universally abandoned, it nevertheless has all the marks of a very high antiquity. It abounds in *onomotopoetic* words, that is, words derived from

* Delbos' *Chapters on the Science of Language*, p. 22.

an imitation of natural sounds, of which we have familiar examples in our own language in such expressions as *quack, purr, caw; sigh, moan, whoop; clap, clang, whir*; and multitudes of others. The nearer a language is to its primitive state, the more abundant will such expressions be found, since they are apt to be changed with the lapse of time, just as pebbles are rounded by the constant action of the sea. Hebrew, again, delights in *assonances*, or jingles of words—another undoubted mark of a language possessed of great antiquity. Thus, in the very second verse of the Bible, the words which are rendered in our authorised version “without form and void,” read in Hebrew, *Thohu va-Vohu*; and many similar jingles of sounds might be quoted.

From its highly metaphorical character, Hebrew is admirably fitted for the purposes of poetry. Even in prose it is often marked by poetical forms of expression, as when the wise woman of Tekoah says (2 Sam. xiv. 14), not only that “we must needs die,” but adds that we “are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.” As Dr. Farrar has well said, a Hebrew “seemed ill at ease in realizing a conception, unless he could paint it in words confessedly and distinctly picturesque;” and he adds, that in the Old Testament, “People not only speak, but open their mouths and speak; not only answer, but answer and say; not only get

angry, but their visage is inflamed; not only sorrowful, but their visage falls; do not merely go back, but rise up and return to the place whence they came forth; and the widow of Tekoah is not only a widow, but thinks it necessary to tell David that she is a 'widow woman, and her husband is dead.' When, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Pistol uses the expression, 'He hears with ears,' Sir Hugh Evans indignantly exclaims, 'What phrase is this, "He hears with ears"? Why, it is affectations.' But, in point of fact, so far from being 'affectations,' it marks the pictorial redundancy of the earliest stages of language."*

When, however, we come to look at the distinctively poetical books of the Old Testament, we find that it is in Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, and some of the other prophets, that the grandeur of Hebrew poetry is most strikingly displayed. As is well known, *parallelism* is the feature by which it is specially distinguished. By this, speaking generally, is meant the repetition in two poetic lines of the same idea with slight, if any, modification. Examples abound throughout the sacred writings, and one or two may here be quoted. A very pure illustration is found in the poetical outburst of Balaam, recorded in Numbers xxiii. 7—10: it will

* *Lang. and Langs.*, p. 359.

be observed that the lines run in couplets, the second line always repeating, while modifying, the sentiment contained in the first.* “He took up his parable, and said,—

7. “ From Aram has Balak brought me,
The king of Moab from the mountains of the East :
Come, curse me Jacob,
And come, speak wrath against Israel.
8. How shall I execrate whom God hath not execrated ?
And how shall I speak against him whom God hath not
spoken against ?
9. For from the top of the rocks I see him,
And from the hills I behold him :
Lo ! the people who shall dwell alone,
And shall not reckon themselves among the nations !
10. Who has counted the dust of Jacob,
Or the number of the fourth of Israel ?
Let my soul die the death of the righteous,
And let my last end be like his.”

One other passage may be given in illustration of the parallelism so characteristic of Hebrew poetry. I select Job iii. 20—24, and translate the passage as follows :—

* The examples which follow illustrate what has been called *synonymous parallelism*, in which the same thought is repeated in varying but equivalent terms. Bishop Lowth also notices *antithetic parallelism*, in which a point is brought clearly out by its opposite being set over against it, and *synthetic* or *constructive parallelism*, which depends simply on the form of construction. For instances of the former, see Prov. xxvii. 6, 7, 1 Sam. ii. 4—7 ; and of the latter, Ps. xix. 7—10, Isa. xliii. 2.

20. "Why doth He give light to him that is miserable,
And life unto the bitter in soul ;
21. Who long for death, and it cometh not,
And dig for it more than for hid treasures ;
22. Who would rejoice exceedingly
And exult if they could find a grave?
23. *Why* to a man whose way is hid,
And whom God hath hedged about ?
24. For my sighing cometh before my food,
And my moanings are poured forth like water."

"The whole composition of this passage," says Bishop Lowth, "is admirable, and deserves a minute attention. 'Wherefore should he give light to the miserable?' But who is the giver alluded to? Certainly God Himself, whom Job has indeed in his mind; but it escaped his notice that no mention is made of Him in the preceding lines. He seems to speak of the miserable in general, but by a violent and sudden transition he applies the whole to himself. 'But my groaning cometh like my daily food.' It is plain therefore that in all the preceding reflections he has himself only in view. He makes a transition from the singular to the plural, and back again, a remarkable amplification intervening, expressive of his desire of death, the force and boldness of which is incomparable: at last, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he returns to the former subject, which he had apparently quitted, and resumes the detail of his

own misery. From these observations I think it will be manifest, that the agitated and disordered state of the speaker's mind is not more evidently demonstrated by a happy boldness of sentiment and imagery, and an uncommon force of language, than by the very form, conduct, and arrangement of the whole." *

I may here take the opportunity of remarking that, besides illustrating the form and majesty of Hebrew poetry, the above passage also suggests the extreme difficulty which is frequently felt in apprehending the exact meaning of the original. It will be observed that, in the lines specially quoted, Bishop Lowth differs to some extent from the translation presented above; and in some of the other lines he gives quite a different turn to the passage. Where I have ventured to suppose that the questioning form of expression is still continued, and have rendered—

“ *Why* [act thus] to a man whose way is hid,
And whom God hath hedged about ? ”

the Bishop has—

“ Well might it befit the man whose way is sheltered,
And whom God hath surrounded with a hedge.”

This is enough to suggest to every candid and

* *Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, p. 161.

considerate reader of a version of the Old Testament, how much may frequently be said in favour of a somewhat different rendering from that which is preferred by any translator, however competent, or any body of translators, however well qualified for the task which they have undertaken.*

Hebrew, no doubt, existed as a living language long before the earliest period to which we are now able to trace it. Its sister dialect, the Aramaic, exerted no small influence over it throughout the whole course of its history, so far as that is known to us. In fact, the popular dialect of the Israelites is thought by scholars to have approached much nearer to the tongue of Aram than the extant Hebrew literature would seem to indicate.† But the Old Testament itself betrays the influence of the Aramaic. Not only are certain books, such as Job, Ecclesiastes, and others, strongly marked by Aramaisms, but in several passages Hebrew is deserted altogether, and the writer has recourse to the kindred, though different, language. These

* I am glad to find that the rendering which I have adopted is supported by the high authority of De Wette.

† Smith's *Dict.*, Shemitic Langs., p. 1255. Renan observes, "Il est à remarquer que les langues sémitiques diffèrent moins dans la bouche du peuple que dans les livres."—*Lang. Sém.*, p 134.

passages are the four following: (1) Jeremiah x. 11; (2) Daniel ii. 4—vii. 28; (3) Ezra iv. 8—vi. 18; (4) Ezra vii. 12—26. The reason why the first of these passages is expressed in Aramaic, and not Hebrew, may be conjectured to have been that the captive Jews might be able to proclaim to the idolatrous nation who had enslaved them, in language which *they could understand*, the folly of worshipping false gods. The long passage in Daniel may have been written in Aramaic, as having a special interest for those who made use of that language; and the passages in Ezra are evidently given in Aramaic, because such was their original language.

After the return of the Israelites from the captivity (about 450 B.C.), Hebrew speedily died out as a living language, and was replaced by Aramaic. The sacred tongue, however, continued to be studied by scholars, though no longer heard on the lips of the people. For at least a century before Christ it had ceased to be used in writing, as long previously it had been abandoned by the Jews as the medium of oral intercourse with one another.

According to the generally accepted chronology, the Hebrew literature now in our possession extends from about 2000 years before Christ to some centuries before the commencement of our era. One of the most remarkable features of this long-reaching series of literary productions is the similarity of form

by which, from first to last, it is characterized. This fact can hardly be accounted for except upon the theory of successive redactions of the Old Testament.*

The Hebrew Bible, as we now possess it, comprises thirty-nine books. This may seem at first sight inconsistent with the statement of Josephus, when he tells us that there were only "twenty-two books" acknowledged as "divine" among the Jews; that *five* of these belonged to Moses; that *thirteen* were ascribed to the prophets; and that the remaining *four* consisted of hymns and practical precepts for the guidance of human life.† But it is evident that the number *twenty-two* was artificially adopted to correspond to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Several books which we reckon separately were in this way counted together. And it is clear that when Josephus tells us that "the prophets who came after Moses wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books," he includes among "the prophets" all the historical books. The canon of

* As will be noticed in the following chapter, archaic forms certainly exist in the earlier books of Scripture, but only to a very limited extent. Deutsch states the case pretty strongly when he says that "enough remains to show a gradual and important difference between the earlier and the later stages of the language in the earlier and later books of the Old Testament."

—*Literary Remains*, p. 306.

† *Against Apion*, i. 8.

Josephus thus seems to have included (1) The *Law*, consisting of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; (2) The *Prophets*, including Joshua, Judges and Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah with Lamentations, Ezekiel, the twelve minor Prophets, Job, Daniel, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, Esther; and (3) The *Writings*, comprising Psalms, Proverbs, Canticles, and Ecclesiastes. The list of sacred books given by Josephus is thus apparently identical with our own at the present day.

We learn from the New Testament itself that a threefold division of the Old Testament books existed among the Jews in the time of Christ. Thus we read, Luke xxiv. 44, that the risen Saviour said to His disciples, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." The term "Psalms" here represents that section of the Old Testament which is generally spoken of under the technical appellation of *Hagiographa*, that is, holy writings.* And the

* I venture to let this sentence stand, notwithstanding the strong language of Dr. Robertson Smith to the opposite effect (*The Old Test. in Jewish Church*, p. 165). He calls it a "rationalising exegesis" to regard the title *Psalms* as embracing the whole division of the sacred writings to which Psalms the

usual arrangement of the three classes of books is somewhat different from that given above out of Josephus. It is as follows : (1) The Law, including the five books of Moses, generally styled the Pentateuch ; (2) The Prophets, comprising Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the twelve minor Prophets ; and (3) The Hagiographa, embracing Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Canticles, Ruth, Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ecclesiastes. This is the classification which we shall follow in dealing with the several books in the immediately succeeding chapters.

belonged, but worse specimens of such "exegesis" might too easily be found. And unless such books as Daniel, Proverbs, and Job are included under the heading referred to, they must have been ignored by Christ altogether. Yet the canonicity of these books was universally acknowledged by the Jews in our Saviour's day.

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CHAPTER II

THE PENTATEUCH.—AUTHORSHIP AND DATE.

IT seems hardly possible at present to say anything in connection with the Pentateuch, without noticing some recent opinions which have been promulgated as to its authorship and date. The view has of late been widely circulated in our country, that only the most insignificant portions of it (so far as extent is concerned) were written by Moses. We are taught to regard the Book of Deuteronomy as having been unknown till the reign of Josiah (about B.C. 621),* while the Levitical code, passing under the name of Moses, is affirmed to have been first set forth in the times of Ezra (about B.C. 520), that is, immediately after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian exile.

These somewhat startling opinions have recently been maintained, with rare learning and acuteness,

* This date is given by Dr. Robertson Smith as 521 B.C., but that is doubtless a misprint. (*The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 244.)

by Dr. Robertson Smith, in his volume of Lectures entitled "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church." The following extracts from that work will suffice to bring both the nature and importance of his views before us :—

"When the Levitical law first comes on the stage of actual history at the time of Ezra, it presents itself as the law of Moses. People who have not understood the Old Testament are accustomed to say, with the usual presumption of unhistorical rationalism, that this is either literally true or a lie. The Pentateuch is either the literary work of Moses, or it is a barefaced imposture. The reverent and thoughtful student, who knows the complicated difficulties of the problem, will not willingly accept this statement of the question. If we are tied up to make a choice between these two alternatives, it is impossible to deny that all the historical evidence that has come before us points in the direction of the second. . . .

"It is plain that no thinking man can be asked to accept the Pentateuch as the literal work of Moses without some evidence to that effect. But evidence a thousand years after date is no evidence at all, when the intervening period bears unanimous witness in a different sense. By insisting that the whole Pentateuch is one work of Moses, and all of equal date, the traditional view cuts off all possi-

bility of proof that its kernel is Mosaic; for it is certain that Israel, before the exile, did not know all the Pentateuch; therefore, if the Pentateuch is all one, they did not know any part of it. If we are shut up to choose between a Mosaic authorship of the whole five books and the sceptical opinion that the Pentateuch is a mere forgery, the sceptics must gain their case" (pp. 307—309).

"Sacrifice is not necessary to acceptable religion. . . . Micah declares that Jehovah does not require sacrifice; He asks nothing of His people, but 'to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God' (Micah vi. 8). And Jeremiah (vii. 21, *seq.*) says in express words, "Put your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spake not to your fathers, and gave them no command in the day that I brought them out of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people," etc. (compare Isa. xliii. 23, *seq.*). The position here laid down is perfectly clear. When the prophets positively condemn the worship of their contemporaries, they do so because it is associated with immorality, because by it Israel hopes to gain God's favour without moral obedience. This does not prove that they have any objection to sacrifice and ritual in the abstract. But they deny that these

things are of positive divine institution, or have any part in the scheme on which Jehovah's grace is administered in Israel. Jehovah, they say, has not enjoined sacrifice. This does not imply that He has never accepted sacrifice, or that ritual service is absolutely wrong; but it is at best mere form, which does not purchase any favour from Jehovah, and might be given up without offence. It is impossible to give a flatter contradiction to the traditional theory that the Levitical system was enacted in the wilderness. The theology of the prophets before Ezekiel has no place for the system of priestly sacrifice and ritual" (p. 287).

"Whence, then, did the book (Deuteronomy) derive the authority which made its discovery the signal for so great a reformation? How did it approve itself as an expression of the Divine will, first to Hilkiah and Josiah, and then to the whole nation? To this question there can be but one answer. The authority that lay behind Deuteronomy was the power of the prophetic teaching which half a century of persecution had not been able to suppress. After the work of Isaiah and his fellows, it was impossible for any earnest movement of reformation to adopt other principles than those of the prophetic word on which Jehovah Himself had set His seal by the deliverance from Assyria. What the Deuteronomic code supplied was a clear

and practical scheme of reformation on the prophetic lines. It showed that it was possible to adjust the old religious constitution in conformity with present needs, and this was enough to kindle into new flame the slumbering fire of the word of the prophets. The book became the programme of Josiah's reformation, because it gathered up in practical form the results of the great movement under Hezekiah and Isaiah, and the new divine teaching then given to Israel. It was of no consequence to Josiah—it is of equally little consequence to us—to know the exact date and authorship of the book" (p. 362).

Elsewhere we read (p. 320), that "the Pentateuch is a history incorporating at least three bodies of law." The first of these codes is that contained in *Exod.* xxi.—xxiii., and stands "in immediate connection with the fundamental revelation of the ten commandments on Horeb." The second is the law of Deuteronomy, which properly begins with chap. xii., and extends to chap. xxvi. 16. The third is the Levitical legislation "scattered through several parts of Exodus and the books of Leviticus and Numbers." Of these codes, the first only was possessed by the Israelites all through the days of the Judges, of Solomon, and of Hezekiah. Then the second, or Deuteronomic code, was somehow called into being about the time of Josiah. The

third, or Levitical legislation, had not yet been heard of, and was, indeed, utterly unknown till the days of Ezra, when it was announced under the name of Moses, and was at once carried into full operation.

It must be clear to every candid reader of Dr. R. Smith's work, that his great object is to establish what he regards as undoubtedly the *truth* on the subjects dealt with, and that thus the character of his book is as honest as its erudition is remarkable. It is indeed one of the most honourable and outstanding features of the age in which we live, that a passion for the true is growing among men, and that the prepossessions of former times no longer wield the power which was so long accorded them. There can be no doubt that many critical results have now been conclusively established against the old traditional opinions. To give only one example : No one worth listening to would deny at the present day that the Book of Genesis is *composite*, that it is, in fact, a congeries of fragments collected from many different sources, and proceeding from many different authors. But the danger has now arisen of supposing that traditional views must be wrong altogether, and that, if "criticism" has conquered at some points, it must be held to have been victorious all along the line. This is a fallacy to

be most carefully guarded against in dealing with all Biblical questions. There is even an antecedent probability that tradition will, to a certain extent, be right, since it has succeeded in establishing itself among the accepted opinions of mankind. At any rate, it has a claim to be fairly and even favourably considered; and nothing could be more unscientific than to fly off from all that has hitherto been generally believed on any particular point, and to suppose that truth can be reached only by forsaking traditional opinions altogether.

Now, it humbly appears to me that this tendency is strikingly illustrated in the lectures of Dr. R. Smith. That a belief is *traditional* seems almost to amount with him to a demonstration that it is *false*. In one passage, indeed, "Jewish tradition" is referred to as "welcome" along with other facts.* But, practically, criticism and traditionalism are pitted against each other throughout the entire volume, and the former is invariably permitted to over-ride the latter. This is not the way to reach the truth; and I shall now endeavour to show, of course very briefly, that the tradition which ascribes the Pentateuch, in its substance, to Moses, remains unshaken, notwithstanding the elaborate attack which Dr. Robertson Smith has made upon it, while the view

* *Old Testament*, p. 26.

which he has tried to substitute in its place involves difficulties and improbabilities of the most formidable character.

First, then, let us consider *the strength of the tradition* which ascribes the Pentateuch to Moses.

That tradition is of the most ancient and harmonious character. It has existed among the Jews of all ages, countries, and sects; while it is again and again accredited by our Lord Himself. We find it throughout the whole of the Old Testament, as in Josh. viii. 31, 32; 1 Kings ii. 3; Ezra iii. 2; Nehem. viii. 1; Mal. iv. 4, etc. It is everywhere in the Jewish historian Josephus (see especially his *Antiquities*, book iii. *passim*). It is maintained in all countries (see Acts xv. 21). It is held alike by Sadducees and Pharisees (see Matt. xxii. 24; Mark x. 4, etc.). Above all, it is constantly referred to by Christ as embodying an undoubted truth. Thus in John vii. 19, He asks the Jews, "Did not *Moses* give you the law?" and this is only one of many passages in which our Lord accepts, and argues upon, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Now, is all this to be set aside, as so much worthless evidence, in deference to some difficulties called forth by "criticism" at the present day? To my mind no difficulty could be so great as that of believing that such an unbroken and powerfully

supported tradition should be baseless. And, while far from seeking to hamper or overbear critical processes or results by the citation of mere authority, I must acknowledge that the repeated allusions which Christ makes to the Pentateuch as the work of Moses impresses my mind with the conviction that the tradition which prevailed to that effect rested on a foundation of fact. No one has spoken in loftier or more reverent language of our Lord than has Dr. R. Smith, and with the views which he entertains of Him as the incarnate Truth of God, the tradition which He so often corroborates as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch should surely be regarded as comprising a genuine historical fact.

Secondly, let us look at *the evidence which the Pentateuch itself presents in favour of its Mosaic origin.*

We turn to such a chapter as Exodus xxxii., and there we read (ver. 7—10) the following words: “And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of

Egypt. And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." And then we read (ver. 30—34), as the sublime sequel to this divine menace, as follows: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them." Can any one read this passage, trembling as it is throughout with personal feeling, and believe that it is not a record, at first hand, of what actually occurred, but is an invention of an age a thousand years later than the period at which the events profess to have occurred? Surely, any mind which can rest in such

a supposition must have been so utterly sophisticated with theories, as to be unable to distinguish between the genuine and the false. And so in regard to many other portions of the Pentateuch. It contains narratives, such as that respecting Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, so congruous to the circumstances of the history, and descriptions so minute, such as the details concerning the construction of the tabernacle, that, unless they were written at the time by one who was familiar with them, it is necessary to conceive of a creative genius almost superhuman, who, so late as the days of Ezra, could project himself into the old desert life, and draw ideal pictures—so baseless, yet so natural—of what then took place among the children of Israel in the wilderness!

But, more than this, Moses is in several passages expressly declared to have *written down* in the desert the injunctions which he received from the lips of Jehovah. Thus we read in Exod. xxxiv. 27, after the enumeration of various special precepts, that “the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with Israel.” It almost appears, indeed, that there was a well-known volume in which the Jewish lawgiver regularly kept a record of events as they occurred. We read in Exod. xvii. 14, that “the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial,”

not "in *a* book," as in the English Authorised Version, but "in *the* book," apparently referring to a record which Moses was understood to keep of God's dealings with His people in the wilderness. See also Exod. xxiv. 4, and Numb. xxxiii. 2, in which Moses is expressly said to have written "all the words of the Lord," etc.; and compare such passages as Lev. xxvi. 46, xxvii. 34; in which, after a detailed account of various laws, the words are added, "These are the commandments which *the Lord commanded Moses* for the children of Israel in *Mount Sinai*." It does seem somewhat audacious, in the face of all this, for a writer at the present day to maintain that the middle books of the Pentateuch had no existence till the days of Ezra, and were then set forth by an unknown author under the name of Moses. Such a claim, if made, must have refuted itself. The book would have borne fabrication on its very surface; and, to say nothing of the morality of its author, not the most credulous of mankind could have been persuaded to admit the pretensions which were made in its behalf.

* Subsidiary, but very substantial, arguments for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch are moreover to be found in the minute acquaintance with Egyptian practices which it contains, and in the aroma of the desert, so to speak, which hangs around it. For the former, the reader may turn to Gen. xlv. 5, in which

a well-known form of Egyptian divination is referred to, or to Numb. xi. 5, which mentions various kinds of food specially used in Egypt, and many other passages which indicate the utmost familiarity with the products and habits of Egypt.* Every one, again, who reads the Pentateuch with unclouded eye must trace in it proofs of the writer's familiarity with the topography and phenomena of the desert. Dr. Robertson Smith, no doubt, affirms that the work "displays an exact topographical knowledge of Palestine, but by no means so exact a knowledge of the wilderness of the wandering," and that "the narrative has none of that topographical colour which the story of an eye-witness is sure to possess."† But most writers, competent to speak with authority on the subject, have expressed a very different opinion. Thus, the late Dean Stanley, referring to Exod. xix. 2, where we read that "Israel camped before the mount," remarks that, whatever theory may be held as to "the mountain of the law, the plain below will still remain the essential feature of the view of the Israelite camp. That such a plain should exist at all in front of such a cliff is so remarkable a coincidence with the sacred narrative, as to furnish a strong internal argument, not merely

* This has been illustrated at great length by many writers; see especially Hengstenberg's *Egypt and the Books of Moses*.

† *Old Testament*, etc., p. 324.

of its identity with the scene, but of the scene itself having been described *by an eye-witness*."* And so in regard to many other particulars. Now, such an accurate acquaintance with Egyptian customs as has been indicated, and such exactness with reference to the wilderness, are perfectly natural when the Pentateuch is regarded as having been written by Moses, but become little less than miraculous if the work is considered as a product of the times of Ezra. Such a theory may safely be dismissed as incredible.

I have as yet made no direct allusion to the authorship of Deuteronomy. But I now remark that it is bound to the other Pentateuchal books by some peculiarities of expression well known to all Hebrew scholars. Archaic forms occur in it, and the rest of the Mosaic writings, that are found nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible. Amid the many revisions to which the Pentateuch was undoubtedly subjected, the latest of which took place under Ezra, there were still left in it some antique and peculiar forms which mark out the several books as belonging to the same stage in the development of the Hebrew language, or, in other words, to the same period in the history of the Israelitish people. And then the Book of Deuteronomy expressly claims to have been written by Moses. Thus we read in chap. xxxi. 9, that

* *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 42.

“Moses wrote this law,” and substantially the same assertion is made in other passages. Now, whatever may be thought of the innocence of that “legal fiction” of which Dr. R. Smith speaks so complacently (p. 385), it seems impossible to believe that a book like Deuteronomy, which avows itself to be the production of Moses, would ever have obtained credit had it first become known only in the days of Josiah. The demand here again made by “criticism” upon our faith is so great as to be plainly inadmissible.

Thirdly, it is not correct to say that there is no *pre-exilic testimony in favour of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch*.

In a passage quoted above, Dr. R. Smith tells us respecting the Israelitish prophets, that “they say Jehovah has not enjoined sacrifice.” He founds the statement specially on a passage in Jeremiah, chap. vii., regarding which he observes that “the position here laid down is perfectly clear.” And so it must, no doubt, be considered, if we look at these words in ver. 22 by themselves, and put a literal construction upon them: “For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.” These words appear to negative as plainly as language

can do the Divine appointment of sacrifice as set forth in the Levitical legislation. But no one—and far less a scholar like Dr. R. Smith—needs to be told how dangerous a principle of interpretation it is to isolate a few words from the context in which they are imbedded, and then to assign them a rigid literal meaning, without taking anything else into account. The most grotesque and even revolting ideas might thus be attached to many passages of Scripture. In the present instance, I can only express my utter amazement that so acute and able a man as Dr. R. Smith should have allowed himself to rest for one moment in the explanation of the passage which he has suggested. That he has done so can, I believe, only be accounted for by the seeming support which, when read superficially, it gives to that theory of the Levitical laws which he has adopted.* For, let us read the passage with its context, and the meaning of it will be perfectly clear. It stands as follows (vv. 21—24): “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh; for I spake not unto your fathers, nor com-

* It may be noticed that in his exegesis of this passage, as in so many other respects, Dr. R. Smith has followed Professor Wellhausen. That author infers from the words in question that Jeremiah knew nothing of the Levitical code as having been given through Moses.—*Geschichte Israels*, i. 61.

manded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices ; but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people ; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.” Is it not obvious to every one, on reading over these words, that the great principle which they involve is just that laid down so tersely in another part of the Old Testament (1 Sam. xv. 22), “To obey is *better* than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”? Mere ritual was as nothing in comparison with the moral and spiritual character of the worshipper. This is constantly set forth both in the Old and New Testaments. Thus we read in Hosea vi. 6, “I desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God *more than* burnt offerings.” Compare the use of this text made by our Lord in Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7, and see a similar form of expression in Ps. xl. 6, li. 16, 17, etc. The obvious meaning of the passage in Jeremiah is, that, while the Israelites continued to disobey God in heart and life, it was utterly vain for them to seek His favour by the presentation of sacrifices of any sort whatever. The prophet indignantly tells them to take even the

burnt offerings which used to be wholly consumed upon the altar, and add them to the peace offerings, part of which properly belonged to themselves. They would thus, at least, not altogether throw away their sacrifices, but would, by not offering them to God, be able to gratify their own sensual propensities in connection with them. All the offerings of whatever kind presented to God were, when viewed by themselves, only like the "mint, anise, and cummin" referred to by our Lord in Matt. xxiii. 23; and "the weightier matters of the law" have always been "judgment, mercy, and faith;" but, adds Christ, in language exactly applicable to the point before us, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." It is obvious that the words of Jeremiah, instead of implying that the Israelites of his day were not acquainted with the Levitical enactments, would have had no point whatever, unless the men whom he addressed had been perfectly familiar with the various kinds of sacrifices to which he refers. And thus the passage on which Dr. R. Smith builds so much not only fails to yield him support, but proves the very opposite of what he maintains.*

* I have dwelt at some length upon this passage, because Dr. R. Smith appears to attach to it special importance. Again and again he refers to Jer. vii. 22, and, on the ground of that verse, says that "Jeremiah denies in express terms that a law

There are many texts and narratives of Scripture which might be quoted to show that the Levitical law was known among the Israelites before the exile. But I must be satisfied with simply referring to the following passages for comparison with each other : Hosea xii. 4, with Gen. xxxii. 24 ; Joel ii. 2, with Exod. x. 14 ; Amos v. 17, with Exod. xii. 12 ; 1 Kings xx. 42, with Lev. xxvii. 29 ; 2 Kings vii. 3, with Lev. xiii. 46, and Numb. v. 3, etc.*

On considering such passages, well may it be said that, "beyond all doubt, there are numerous most striking references both in the Prophets and in the Books of Kings to passages which are found in our present Pentateuch. One thing at least is certain,

of sacrifice forms any part of the Divine commands to Israel" (p. 372 ; comp. pp. 117, 263, 370). How utterly baseless is such an assertion has, I trust, been sufficiently shown above.

* A great number of additional texts are quoted for comparison in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. Pentateuch, and in Hengstenberg's *Authenticity of the Pentateuch*, though it must be admitted that some of them are far from conclusive. The following are the suggestive words of a man who had no pretensions to be regarded as a scholar in the technical sense of the word, but who was possessed of a very shrewd intellect, as well as a very lofty genius. Commenting on 1 Kings ii. 3, Dr. Chalmers remarks, "One feels interested by his (David's) reference to the law of Moses—that law which, as appears in the *Psalms*, was the frequent study and meditation of this great monarch." This one text, and the reflections it suggests, are, in fact, conclusive.

that the theory of men like Von Bohlen, Vatke, and others, who suppose the Pentateuch to have been written in the times of the latest kings, is utterly absurd."* If this be so, one cannot but deeply regret that tone of dogmatism by which Dr. R. Smith's interesting volumes are disfigured. He speaks in one passage of "the demonstration" which has of late been given "that the priestly legislation did not exist before the exile."† But, happily, the *demonstrations* of "criticism" are not quite so stable as are those of Euclid. Only a generation ago, it was supposed to have been demonstrated that our first Gospel is a translated, and not an original work. But what scholar of any eminence now maintains that opinion? In like manner, the "critics" not so long ago maintained that our third Gospel was built upon that of the heretical Marcion who flourished in the second quarter of the second century. But that view also has become thoroughly discredited, and Marcion's Gospel is now universally admitted to have been a mutilated copy of that of St. Luke. And so, I believe, will it be with the question we have been considering. Further inquiry will dissipate the views which now prevail among the so-called *critics*, and will prove that the Pentateuch, as

* Smith's *Dictionary*, ii. p. 780.
The Prophets of Israel, p. xi

we now possess it, is to be traced, in substance, to the legislator, Moses.

I say, in substance, for that slight additions have been made to it since his day is unquestionable. It was always, of course, admitted that the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which contains an account of the death of Moses, had been written by another hand. But several other obvious interpolations may be detected. We ought to remember that the Pentateuch must have been subjected to many redactions before receiving its final shape in the times of Ezra; and on these occasions various notes and explanations seem to have been inserted in the text. Among these are to be reckoned the following: Gen. xii. 6, xiii. 7, "And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land," with Gen. xxxvi. 31, "These are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the land of Israel." And such a passage as Numb. xii. 3, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth," should at once be granted to have been a marginal note which has slipped into the text. It is impossible to conceive of Moses as writing of himself in such terms, but nothing is more natural than that a note of the kind should have been made by an editor or transcriber, and that this note should, in course of time, have found its way into the narrative itself.

We know that this has happened in several cases, with respect to the manuscripts of the New Testament. Such is the explanation, probably, to be given of the insertion of the doxology of the Lord's Prayer, Matt. vi. 13; of the statement as to the angel which is found in John v. 3, 4; and of the ecclesiastical formula which appears in Acts viii. 37. So in regard to the Old Testament. There is no difficulty in conceiving that slight but significant interpolations of the kind referred to should, in course of ages, have been introduced into the Mosaic narrative; while nevertheless the Pentateuch, as a whole, must be ascribed to the immediate authorship of the great lawgiver of Israel.*

* An acute remark of Astruc, the celebrated Belgian physician, who was the first in modern times to suggest the documentary hypothesis as to the origin of Genesis, is worth referring to in this place. In his "*Conjectures*," published in 1753, he observes that "Moses always speaks in Genesis as a simple historian, and never says that any part of his narrative has been conveyed to him by inspiration." He proceeds to notice that it is otherwise in the remaining books of the Pentateuch. On this Dr. R. Smith justly remarks (p. 419), "When ^t is admitted that the Bible history is based upon written sources, oral testimony, and personal observation, no theory of inspiration can alter the principle that the knowledge of the writers was limited by their sources."

CHAPTER III.

THE PENTATEUCH.—CORRECTIONS OF THE AUTHORISED ENGLISH VERSION.

I NOW proceed to direct attention to some amendments which require to be made on the Authorised English Version of the Pentateuch. Passing over multitudes of slight improvements which are called for, only those which seem of great or considerable importance will here be noticed.

Gen. ii. 4, 5, stands in our common version as follows:—"These are the generations of the heaven and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground." Every reader must feel the awkwardness of this statement; but the true rendering completely escapes from it, and is as follows:—"These are the generations" (or "This is the history") "of the

heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground."

Gen. xii. 6, xiii. 18, xiv. 13, xviii. 1. The Hebrew word rendered in all these passages "plain" (or "plains") should in each case be translated *oak*, or *oak-groves*, though some Hebraists think that the term employed denotes a *terebinth*, and others that it simply means a *large forest tree*. Nothing can be said as to the signification of the word "Moreh."

Gen. xii. 9. In this verse it would be preferable that the expression "south" should be printed with an initial capital letter, as indicating Abram's approach to a well-known and definite region called "the South." The same remark applies to many other passages.

Gen. xxviii. 20—22. These verses stand as follows in the Authorised Version:—"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou

shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.” By this translation, the construction is made to change in the middle of ver. 21, but such is not the case in the original. The Hebrew does not adopt the future tense till the first clause of ver. 22 is reached, and the better rendering therefore is, “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, and if I come again to my father’s house in peace, and if the Lord will be my God, then shall this stone, which I have set for a pillar, be the house of God, and of all that Thou hast given me, I will surely give a tenth unto Thee.”*

Gen. xxxi. 19, 34, 35. The Hebrew word which is in these verses translated “images” would perhaps better be left in its original form, “Teraphim.” The reference is to images in the human form, large or small, which seem to have been made use of for the purposes of divination. They may have been analogous to the “images” of ancestors so much revered among the Romans. At any rate, they implied an early form of superstition bordering on idolatry, and, as doing so, are condemned in several

* The above change is approved of in “The Speaker’s Commentary,” but is not accepted by De Wette. I have throughout this chapter consulted these two important authorities, without, however, being always able to agree with either.

passages of Scripture. (See 1 Sam. xv. 23; 2 Kings xxiii. 24.)

Gen. xxxvi. 24. The words which are in this verse rendered "Anah that found the *mules* in the wilderness," ought to be translated "Anah that found the *hot springs* in the wilderness." The word does not occur anywhere else in the Old Testament.

Gen. xxxvii. 28, xxxix. 1. In these verses we find the absurd form "Ishmeelites," instead of the usual and correct form "Ishmaelites," met with in almost every other part of Scripture. Many readers have doubtless puzzled themselves with the two different forms of the same word; and it is evident that such unmeaning and perplexing diversity can in no way whatever be justified.

Gen. xlix. 10. This is a very difficult passage, and widely different views have been held as to its meaning. The reason of this diversity of opinion is chiefly to be found in the word *Shiloh*, which occurs in the verse. Is that word subject or object? is it the name of a place, or the designation of a person? and, if the latter, how should it be translated? After the most careful consideration, I believe the verse should be rendered as follows: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until (He who is) Peace comes, and unto Him shall be the obedience of nations." Of course, this rendering implies that the verse has a

Messianic reference; and that, of itself, is sufficient to discredit it in the estimation of a certain class of scholars. I am afraid it must be said that the self-styled "critical" school of interpreters is distinguished by a tendency always, if possible, to set aside any reference in Old Testament passages to a coming Messiah. But why should this be so? What is the Old Testament without its Christology? It then sinks into a series of comparatively uninteresting and unimportant narratives, which can be regarded as but of little value to us at the present day. But let it have *Christ* in view throughout, let references to a personal Messiah be seen imbedded in its announcements, and it then becomes part of a grand living organism, instinct from beginning to end with the revelation of God's grace to the children of men. The Bible in its many parts, and with its manifold varieties of teaching, is thus felt, in a spiritual sense, to be but one book. Christ first as *coming*, and then as *come*, gives a unity to the whole of revelation, and imparts a dignity worthy of God to every portion of Scripture. So far, then, from there being any objection to the interpretation which is offered of an Old Testament passage, in the fact that it implies a reference to the Messiah, that is rather a recommendation of the explanation suggested, provided it does no violence to the proper lexical and grammatical meaning of the words. And here

I cannot but remark on the appropriation of the title "critical," as peculiarly or exclusively applicable to those who set themselves against opinions which have hitherto been generally accepted. For what is *criticism*? Is it not the ascertainment of truth? And who has any right to say that views which have been entertained for ages are not true, until they have been shown to be false? Let all that can be *proved* to be unfounded or capricious in the traditional teaching of the Church be unhesitatingly set aside; but let not the utterly unscientific principle be adopted, that an opinion must be erroneous simply because it has prevailed through many generations, and because it still commends itself to those who believe that truth is old as well as new, and who are anxious to embrace the truth, whatever may be the nature of the claims by which it is urged on their consideration and acceptance.

Exod. ii. 11, 12. These verses run as follows in our common English translation:—"And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens; and he spied an Egyptian *smiting* an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he *slew* the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand." Here comes out one of the most character-

istic blemishes of the Authorised Version—its needless and misleading variations in the rendering of terms which are exactly the same in the original. The verb translated “smiting” in the first of the two verses quoted above, and “slew” in the second, is in both cases the same in the Hebrew; and a uniformity of rendering ought manifestly to be preserved.

Exod. iii. 22, xi. 2, xii. 35, 36. It is the general opinion of Hebrew scholars that the word translated “borrow” in the first three of these passages would be more correctly rendered “ask;” and that, correspondingly, the word translated “lent,” in the last passage, should be simply rendered “gave.” There can be no doubt that *ask* and *give* are the usual meanings of the Hebrew words, and by adopting these renderings here, as in other passages of the Old Testament, a seeming want of straightforwardness, which exists in the narrative as it stands, no longer suggests itself to the mind of the reader.

Exod. ix. 5. This verse stands in our common version as follows:—“For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.” But it is evident that such a translation does not cohere with the context either before or after; and most Hebraists agree that the more correct ren-

dering is, "For now, had I stretched forth my hand, and smitten thee and thy people with the pestilence, then hadst thou been cut off from the earth."

Exod. ix. 31. "And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled." Probably few modern readers could quite at once explain this last clause as meaning that "the flax was *in blossom*." And this leads me to remark that the many other obsolete terms which occur in the Old Testament should, of course, be exchanged for language which is intelligible at the present day. Among these are to be reckoned such expressions as the following: *ouches*, *earing*, *brigandine*, *all to* (for "altogether"), *delicates*, *bravery* (*Isa.* iii. 18, in the sense of the Scotch "braws"), *vagabond* (for "wanderer"), *noisome* (for "noxious") *scrabbled*, *minish*, *undersetters*, and many others, more of which will be found noticed in the concluding chapter of this work.

Exod. xxxiv. 13. Here we find the following in our English translation:—"But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves." The rendering "groves," which occurs in this verse, and in many other passages, is quite erroneous. The Hebrew word made use of (*asherim*) always denotes either a heathen goddess or images intended to represent her. In this passage "images" must be meant, while in 1 Kings xv. 13, the goddess

herself must be referred to, but the word "grove" is never an appropriate rendering of the original. (See afterwards on *Deut.* vii. 5.)

Exod. xxxiv. 33. In this verse the Authorised English Version is altogether erroneous and misleading. It stands thus: "And *till* Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face." This word "till" is quite an improper supplement. It should be *when*, as the Septuagint and other ancient versions show, and as the reasoning of St. Paul on the passage (2 Cor. iii. 13, *seq.*) demands. The common belief is, that when Moses *spoke* to the people, he had the veil upon his face. But not so: "he spoke to them *without* the veil, with his face shining and glorified; when he *ceased* speaking to them, he put on the veil; but whensoever he went in before the Lord to speak to Him, the veil was removed till he came out, and had *spoken* to the Israelites all that the Lord had commanded him, during which speaking they saw that his face shone, and after which speaking he again put on the veil. So that the veil was the symbol of concealment and transitoriness: the part revealed they might see, beyond that they could not: the ministry was a broken, interrupted one; its end was wrapped in obscurity." * The verse before us, then, should be

* Alford on 2 Cor. 13. *seq.*

rendered—"And *when* Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face."

Lev. v. 16, vi. 21, viii. 15, etc. The point in common to these verses, as they stand in the Authorised Version, is that they needlessly introduce varieties of rendering as regards certain Hebrew words. In v. 16, "harm" is substituted for "sin," which is the translation adopted everywhere else throughout the book; in vi. 21, a very uncommon Hebrew expression is translated "baken," while in vii. 12 the same word is rendered "fried;" and in viii. 15 we find "to make reconciliation" for "to atone," which is the translation of the word given in almost every other passage. It is obvious that such capricious varieties of rendering are fitted only to bewilder and mislead the English reader.

Lev. xvi. 8. We here read in the Authorised Version, "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scape-goat." The word *azazel*, here translated "scape-goat," has given rise to very various interpretations. The two forms of expression, "for the Lord," and "for *azazel*," are exactly the same in the original, so that we can hardly understand the latter as literally referring to the goat itself. What view, then, is to be adopted as to its meaning? In answer to this question, the following judicious

remarks seem to me worthy of quotation:—"May it not be supposed that the word azazel was somewhat vague and indeterminate in its signification to the ancient Israelites themselves, just as *redemption* is to the Christian? So far as our sinful condition is concerned, nothing can be plainer or more vitally important; but when the question is asked, 'To whom is this redemption paid?' no certain and satisfactory answer has been, or can be, given. May it not have been in the same way with this word to the Israelites? That their sins were borne away was most clearly taught; but looking upon these sins as concrete realities, the question might arise, 'Whither were they carried?' The answer is, in the first place, to the wilderness, 'to the place of banishment from God;' and then further to azazel. It was not necessary that the word should be clearly understood; in fact, the more vague its meaning, the more perfect the symbolism." * In these circumstances, perhaps the best way to deal with the term is simply to leave it untranslated, as has been done by many interpreters, ancient and modern, and so to read the verse thus: "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for Jehovah, and the other lot for azazel."

* Dr. F. Gardiner in Lange's *Commentary*, edited by Dr. Schaff, vol. ii. *in loc.*

Lev. xviii. 18. This verse has been the subject of much controversy in connection with the question of the lawfulness of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. The authorised English translation is fairly correct, but may perhaps be slightly improved as follows:—"Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to provoke her to jealousy, . . . in addition to her, during her lifetime." The alternative rendering found on the margin of our English Bibles—"one wife to another"—as if polygamy were the thing forbidden, is, I think, wholly inadmissible.* Two *sisters*, in the literal sense of the words, are unquestionably referred to, and polygamy being apparently for the time conceded (comp. *Matt.* xix. 8), the prohibition is to this effect, that two sisters shall not simultaneously be the wives of one man. The seemliness as well as expediency of such an enactment is clear; but it obviously leaves the question open as to marriage with the sister of a wife who is dead; or rather, by the emphasis which it puts on the words "in her lifetime," it

* Prof. Lagarde, indeed, in a recent brochure, thinks that there is in the verse a reference to polygamy. He argues that the Hebrew word rendered in our version, "to vex her," should be translated a "fellow-wife;" but it is difficult to believe, in view of the subsequent Biblical history, that the verse contains a prohibition of polygamy. In that case, however, it will simply have no bearing whatever on the question of marriage with a deceased wife's sister.

implicitly sanctions such marriages as perfectly lawful. This must, I humbly think, be manifest to every one who looks at the passage with an unbiassed judgment; and it is simply a matter of regret and reproach, that English law has not yet acknowledged the validity of the marriages in question, while so much suffering and sorrow have followed in consequence.

Numb. xiv. 21—23. More than one mistake occurs in the rendering of these verses, as they stand in our authorised translation. They should be corrected as follows:—"But as truly as I live, and all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, all those men who have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice, shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers: all who have rejected me shall not see it."

Numb. xxiii. 18—24. The magnificent poetical outbursts contained in the narrative respecting Balaam (chap. xxii. 2—xxiv. 25) all admit of being more correctly rendered than in our common version. The first of them (chap. xxiii. 7—10) has already been given in an amended form, as an example of parallelism, in chapter i. We have now to look at Balaam's second utterance, and we find that it

requires to be corrected in English somewhat to the following effect:—

18. "Rise up, Balak, and hear ;
Hearken unto me, O son of Zippor.
19. God is not a man, that He should lie ;
Neither a son of man, that He should repent.
Hath He said, and shall He not do it ?
And spoken, and shall He not make it good ?
20. Behold, I have received [an inspiration] to bless,
And He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.
21. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob,
Neither hath He seen misery in Israel ;
The Lord his God is with him,-
And the shout of a king is in his midst.
22. God brought them forth out of Egypt ;
He hath, as it were, the strength of an urus.
23. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob,
And there is no divination against Israel.
In due time it shall be told to Jacob and Israel what God doeth.
24. Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion,
And lift up himself as a young lion :
He shall not lie down till he eat of the prey,
And drink the blood of the slain."

The meaning of ver. 21 has often been mistaken. As frequently happens, there is a slight deviation in the second branch of the parallel from the meaning of the first, but here with strict logical precision. God beheld not *iniquity* in Jacob—viewing them, not as individuals, but in their corporate capacity as in covenant with Him ; and therefore neither did He see *misery* in Israel—there

was no suffering, because there was no sin. The rendering "unicorn" in ver. 22 is a very unfortunate one. It is taken literally from the Septuagint version, which here suggests quite an erroneous conception of the meaning. The reference is probably to a sort of gigantic wild ox, well known to the ancients, although now apparently extinct. Cæsar gives a striking description of an animal of this kind, as inhabiting the Hercynian forest (*Gallic War*, vi. 28). He styles it the *urus*, and his account of the strength, size, form, swiftness, and ferocity, by which it was distinguished, harmonizes well with the other references made in Scripture (Job xxxix. 11; Ps. xxii. 21, etc.) to the animal spoken of in this passage. In ver. 23, some prefer the rendering "in" to "against," and take the meaning to be that the arts of divination were not practised among the Israelites. This was, no doubt, true, and the original is perhaps rather in favour of such a translation, but the words do not then seem congruous to the circumstances of the speaker.

Numb. xxiv. 3—9. This passage does not require much emendation, but may be given as follows:—

3. "Thus saith Balaam, the son of Beor,
Thus saith the man whose eyes are opened,
4. Thus saith he who has heard the words of God,
Who hath seen the vision of the Almighty,
And, falling down, hath had his eyes opened :

5. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob !
Thy tabernacles, O Israel !
6. As the valleys are they spread forth,
As gardens by the river's side,
As trees of sweet aloes which the Lord hath planted,
As cedar trees beside the waters.
7. He shall pour forth water from his two buckets,
And his seed shall be in many waters,
And his king shall be higher than Agag,
And his kingdom shall be exalted.
8. God brought him forth out of Egypt,
He hath, as it were, the strength of an urus :
He shall eat up the nations his enemies,
And shall suck dry their bones,
And shall break in pieces their arrows.
9. He couched, he lay down as a lion,
And as a great lion : who shall raise him up ?
Blessed is he that blesseth thee,
And cursed is he that curseth thee."

In ver. 4, the "falling down" spoken of seems to refer to the powerful physical effect produced upon Balaam, when the divine afflatus came on him: he was smitten down, and the eyes of his spirit were opened. In ver. 7, there is a reference to the mode of irrigation in the East: the water is poured from two buckets suspended at the two ends of a pole; and so Israel should be well watered, or, in other words, should abound in blessings. In ver. 8, the last clause is very obscure: some render it, "shall pierce them through with his arrows," as in the Authorised Version; and others, "shall break his own arrows," as having no further need of them;

while various emendations of the text have been proposed. The interpretation given above is supported by the high authority of De Wette.

Numb. xxiv. 15—25. This, the concluding prophecy of Balaam, is the most remarkable of the whole. It is in one or two parts very obscure; but the common English version may, with some degree of certainty, be improved as follows:—

“And he took up his parable, and said,—

15. “Balaam, the son of Beor, saith,
And the man whose eyes are open saith,
16. He saith who hath heard the words of God,
And known the knowledge of the Most High,
And seen the vision of the Almighty,
Who, falling down, hath had his eyes opened,—
17. I see him, though he be not now,
I behold him, though not near;
There cometh forth a star out of Jacob,
And there riseth a sceptre out of Israel,
And he smiteth Moab on every side,
And uprooteth all the sons of tumult.
18. And Edom is his possession,
And Seir, belonging to his enemies, is his possession,
And Israel doeth mightily,
19. And he ruleth out of Jacob,
And destroyeth him that escaped from the city.

“And he looked upon the Amalekites, and took up his parable, and said,—

20. “Amalek is the first of the nations,
But his end is utter destruction.

“And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said,—

21. “Strong be thy dwelling-place,
And put thou thy nest upon a rock ;
22. Only then for destruction is Kain,
When Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

“And he took up his parable, and said,—

23. “Alas ! who shall live when God doeth this ?
24. And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim (Cyprus),
And shall humble Asshur, and humble Eber,
And his end, too, is utter destruction.

“And Balaam rose up, and set forth, and returned to his place ; and Balak also went his way.”

The most remarkable statements in this passage are those contained in ver. 17. No one can doubt the extraordinary elevation of Balaam's mind when he uttered these words. But the question arises as to the properly Messianic import of the announcement. Those critics who deny a reference to the Messiah in Gen. xlix. 10, follow the same course with respect to this passage. But the remarks made above, on the former text, also apply here. There is, I believe, in the utterance of Balaam, a still clearer allusion to the coming Messiah than is to be found in the words of Jacob. True, there is no reason to suppose that Balaam himself had anything like a full idea of the meaning of the words he uttered. How much they may have conveyed to his con-

sciousness we cannot tell. But he himself was well aware that a supernatural power had now taken possession of him, and was making him the medium of announcing what of himself he did not desire to speak, and what he certainly did not wholly understand. The Jews manifestly regarded the passage as Messianic, for we find that the title assumed by one of the many false Christs who appeared after our Lord's death was *Barcochba*, that is, "The Son of a Star,"—a title obviously derived from the language of this passage. We are reminded also of the star which guided the wise men of the East to the infant Saviour, and cannot but believe that, in that region to which Balaam himself belonged, the memory of his great prediction had been preserved from generation to generation. In ver. 22, the meaning seems to be that the Kenites, as the friends of Israel (comp. Numb. x. 32, etc.) would be preserved from ruin as long as the Israelites themselves escaped, but the triumph of Asshur would be destructive to both peoples; so terrible indeed would be the results of that event, that Balaam shudders to contemplate it, and regards it as tantamount to the overthrow of all peace and prosperity upon the earth.

Deut. vii. 5, xvi. 21. The first of these passages is thus rendered in the Authorised Version: "But thus shall ye deal with them: ye shall destroy the

altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire ;” while in the second we find, “Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make thee.” But the word translated “grove” in these and other passages should, as before remarked, be rendered “wooden idol,” literally “an Asherah.” The reference is to the pillars of wood which were erected in honour of the Phœnician goddess Ash-taroath, the classical Astarte, or, in general, Venus. It is said that the Koran, notwithstanding its assertion, even to weariness, of the worship of one God, has not been able to eradicate, in countries like Egypt, this ancient pillar worship, even down to the present day.

Deut. xxxii. 40—42. Both the punctuation and, to a certain extent, the meaning of these verses, as given in the Authorised Version, should probably be altered. The passage will then stand thus : “For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, As I live for ever, if I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will recompense them that hate me ; I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh, from the blood of the slain and the captives, from the chief of the princes of the enemy.”

Deut. xxxiii. The following is a continuous rendering of this striking chapter, with which the Pentateuch, as far as Moses is concerned, sublimely closes. No one can read it attentively without perceiving how closely it links itself on to the blessings pronounced by Jacob in *Gen.* xlix.

“And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said,—

2. “The Lord came from Sinai,
And rose up from Seir unto them ;
He shined forth from Mount Paran,
And He came from amidst myriads of holy ones :
From His right hand went a fire : law [was given] for them.
3. Truly He loved the peoples (tribes) ;
All His saints are in thine hand ;
And they sit down at thy feet, to receive thy words.*
4. Moses commanded us a law,
As the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob ;
5. And he was king in Jeshurun,†
When the heads of the people assembled,
And the tribes of Israel came together.
6. Let Reuben live, and not die,
And let not his men be small in number.
7. And this [is the blessing] to Judah ; and he said,
Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah,
And bring him [back] to his people ;

* So De Wette, but the clause is very obscure.

† The “Speaker’s Commentary” here remarks, “Rather *he* became king; *i.e.*, the Lord, not Moses, who is never spoken of as ‘a king.’” But the natural reference is to Moses.

Let his hands be sufficient for him ;
And be thou a help to him from his enemies.

8. And of Levi he said,

Let thy Thummim* and thy Urim be with thy holy
one,†

Whom thou (Israel) didst try at Massah,
And didst strive with at the waters of Meribah ;

9. Who said of his father and of his mother, I have not seen
them,

And did not acknowledge his brethren,
Nor knew his own sons,
For they observed Thy word [O Lord],
And kept Thy covenant.‡

10. They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments,
And Israel Thy law ;

They shall put incense before Thee,
And burnt sacrifice upon Thine altar.

11. Bless, O Lord, his strength,
And let the work of his hands please Thee ;
Smite the loins of those that rise against him,
And of them that hate him, that they rise not again.

12. And of Benjamin he said,
The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety upon him ;
He (the Lord) shall shelter him day by day,
And he (Benjamin) shall dwell between His shoulders.

13. And of Joseph he said,
Blessed be his land of the Lord,
With the precious things of heaven, with the dew,

* De Wette renders, " Let thy *truth* and thy *light* be." It is remarkable that *Thummim* in this place alone stands before *Urim*.

† That is, Levi.

‡ The meaning is that the closest earthly ties were disregarded in order to preserve faithfulness to God. (Compare Matt. x. 37.)

- And with the deep which coucheth beneath,
 14. And with the precious fruits produced by the sun,
 And with the precious fruits drawn forth by the moon,
 15. And with the chief things of the ancient mountains,
 And with the precious things of the everlasting hills,
 16. And with the precious things of the earth, and the fulness
 thereof;
 And let the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush
 Come upon the head of Joseph,
 Even upon the crown of him that was separated from his
 brethren.
17. The firstborn of his (Joseph's) bullock is his glory ; *
 His horns are as the horns of an urus ;
 With them he shall thrust the peoples
 Together to the ends of the earth ;
 And they are the ten thousands of Ephraim,
 And they are the thousands of Manasseh.
18. And of Zebulon he said,
 Rejoice, Zebulon, in thy going forth,
 And, Issachar, in thy tents :
19. They shall call peoples to the mountains,
 There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness,
 For they shall suck of the abundance of the seas,
 And of the hidden treasures of the sand. †
20. And of Gad he said,
 Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad ;
 He coucheth as a lion,
 And teareth the arm, and the crown of the head.
 And he provided the firstfruits for himself,
 For there was the leader's portion reserved. ‡
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* The reference is to Ephraim, who is likened to the firstling of Joseph's bullock.

† All the treasures yielded by the sea.

‡ Compare Numb. xxxii.

- And he came with the heads of the people ; *
 He carried out the justice of the Lord,
 And his judgments with Israel.
22. And of Dan he said,
 Dan is a lion's whelp ;
 He springeth forth from Bashan.
23. And of Naphtali he said,
 O Naphtali, satisfied with favour,
 And full of the blessings of the Lord,
 Possess thou the sea and the sunny district.†
24. And of Asher he said,
 Blessed in sons ‡ be Asher,
 Let him be acceptable to his brethren,
 And let him dip his foot in oil.
25. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass ;
 As thy days, so shall thy strength be.§
26. There is none like unto God, O Jeshurun,
 Who rideth in the heaven for thy help,
 And in His excellency on the clouds.
27. The eternal God is thy dwelling-place,
 And underneath are the everlasting arms,
 And He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee,
 And shall say, Destroy them.
28. And Israel shall dwell in safety ;

* De Wette renders "at the head of the people."

† Or, "the west and the south."

‡ Some prefer "blessed above the sons (of Jacob)," but this would not be in accordance with the facts.

§ One is unwilling to throw any doubt upon this beautiful text. But the translation is far from certain ; and even if the words are allowed to stand as above, we are told in the "Speaker's Commentary" that the sense is, "thy strength shall be continued to thee as long as thou shalt live : thou shalt never know feebleness and decay."

- Alone shall the fountain of Jacob be,
Upon a land of corn and wine ;
Also his heavens shall drop down dew.
29. Happy art thou, O Israel ! who is like unto thee ?
A people saved by the Lord,
The shield of thy help,
And who is the sword of thine excellency ;
And thine enemies shall cringe before thee,
And thou shalt tread upon their high places."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROPHETS.—CORRECTIONS OF THE AUTHORISED ENGLISH VERSION.

A VERY wide field here opens up before us, and we must be content to pass lightly over it. As was indicated in the first chapter, many of the properly historical books have been classed with the Prophets. But as it is in the Prophets, strictly so called, that most of the errors and obscurities observable in our common English version are to be found, I shall devote the greater part of this chapter to these, and shall not linger over such books as Joshua, Judges, and Kings, which are, upon the whole, comparatively well translated.

Joshua v. 14. I select this verse for remark, because it is one of a large class of passages in which a greater precision of rendering is called for than appears in our English version. The word translated “captain” in the clause, “as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come,” received in other passages such renderings as the following:—

chief, general, governor, keeper, lord, master, prince, steward, etc.; while, on the other hand, our English word "captain" represents no fewer than twelve different Hebrew words. Now, while it is true, as has been well remarked, that "scarcely any problem is more perplexing to the translator of the Old Testament than to find appropriate designations for the officials and dignitaries, civil and military, among the Jews and related nations,"* the facts just stated are sufficient to suggest that there is a great amount of unnecessary vagueness, with respect to the rendering of such terms, in our Authorised Version. There must be a certain amount of indefiniteness and confusion even after every effort has been made; but that may nevertheless be greatly reduced from what now exists; and an improvement of this kind will be much to the advantage of the ordinary English reader.

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Judges v. 15—31. This chapter contains the song of Deborah, which is a composition of the loftiest order of poetry, though in some of its parts extremely difficult. There is not a verse in our English translation but admits, more or less, of emendation. I have chosen the latter half of the song for illus-

* Lange's *Comm. on Old Test.*: Joshua, translated by Dr. Bliss, p. 62.

tration, both as being very striking in itself, and as suffering sadly in our Authorised Version. Of course, no claim is made for absolute correctness in presenting the following translation. All that I endeavour to do is to remove some obvious blemishes which exist in our common English version, and thus bring out more clearly the beauties of the original. But no translation can do it justice—none, in particular, can represent the emphatic and impressive *alliteration* by which the Hebrew is distinguished.

The song consists of an introduction (2—5) devoted to the praise of God; and then successively of a description of the misery which had existed (6—8), of gratitude that deliverance had been secured (9—11), of a commendation of those who took part in the battle, or were, at least, willing to help (12—15), of a sarcastic condemnation of the tribes which, though near at hand, gave no assistance to Zebulon and Naphtali, who had boldly encountered the oppressor (15—18), an account of the victory (19—23), and a powerful picture of the death of Sisera, with its attendant circumstances. It should be noticed that verse 16 ought to begin with what is the middle of verse 15 in our Authorised Version. Deborah exclaims,—

15. “Among the streams of Reuben, there were mighty resolutions of heart !

16. Why sittest thou by the folds, to listen to the flute of the herds?
Among the streams of Reuben, there was great deliberation of heart !
17. Gilead rested on the other side of Jordan ;
And Dan, why abode he in his ships?
Asher sat by the sea-shore, and rested in his bays.
18. But Zebulon was a tribe that hazarded his soul unto death,
And Naphtali [also] on the high places of the field.
19. Kings came to fight—then kings of Canaan fought—
At Taanach—at the waters of Megiddo.
Booty of silver gained they none.
20. They fought from heaven :
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
21. The river of Kishon swept them away—
A stream of assistance was Kishon's stream.
22. March boldly on, my soul !
Then the hoofs of the horses struck the ground,
From the fast galloping of their brave riders.
23. Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of the Lord,
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof ;
Because they came not to the help of the Lord,
To the help of the Lord against the mighty.
24. Extolled above women be Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite,
Extolled above women in the tent.
25. He asked for water : she gave him milk ;
She brought him cream in a lordly dish,
26. She stretched forth her hand to the nail,
Her right hand to the workmen's hammer,
And she smote Sisera ; she crushed his head
And she crashed through, and transfixes his temples
27. At her feet he curled himself, he fell, he lay still ;
At her feet he curled himself, he fell,
And where he curled himself, there he fell dead.

28. Through the window there looked,
And through the lattice there called the mother of Sisera,
Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?
29. Her wise ladies answered her,
Yea, she herself answered her own words:
30. Will they not find booty, and divide it?
A maiden, [yea] two maidens for each man,
A booty of coloured garments for Sisera,
A booty of coloured garments of needlework,
A coloured garment, [yea] two garments of needlework
For the necks of [them that take the] spoil.
31. So let all Thine enemies perish, O Lord,
But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth
forth in his might."

A few explanatory remarks may be added to this translation. In ver. 15, 16, the tribe of Reuben is taunted with the grand purposes which were cherished, but led to no practical result. The expression "herds," in ver. 16, seems to be equivalent to "herdsmen." "Gilead," in ver. 17, probably refers to the tribe of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh; so that, these also being excluded, *none* of the tribes east of the Jordan took part in the war. In fact, as appears from chap. iv. 10 (comp. v. 18), only Zebulon and Naphtali mustered on the plains of Issachar, and engaged in the battle with Sisera. In ver. 19, the expression "kings" must be understood as simply denoting *mighty men*. The real meaning of the second clause

of ver. 21 is very doubtful, but that given above seems best to represent the original. Being in flood, the river Kishon "assisted" the Israelites in the destruction of Sisera's host. The same verse strikingly depicts the hurried flight of the conquered foe, as well as Deborah's exultation in picturing to herself the spectacle. Verses 24—26 are a mere patriotic outburst, and do not necessarily imply a moral approbation of the conduct of Jael (compare Ps. cxxxvii. 9).* In ver. 30, the rendering is doubtful in the last clause; and where certainty cannot be reached, it is better to adhere to the Authorised Version. The close of the song is most striking from the *silence* which it preserves as to the disappointment of Sisera's mother. No language, however eloquent, could have been so forcible and impressive.

1 *Kings* iv. 24. I refer to this passage simply as illustrating the needless and hurtful variation which too often occurs in our version with respect to the

* The reader of Scotch history may recall the vigorous lines of Sir David Lindsay, with reference to the murder of Cardinal Beaton :—

"As for the Cardinal, we grant,
He was a man we weel might want,
And we'll forget him sone;
And yet I think, the sooth to say,
Although the lown is weel away,
The deed was foully done."

rendering of the names of places and persons. Here the familiar "Gaza" appears as "Azzah," to the manifest bewilderment of the reader. So, again, at Deut. ii. 23; Jer. xxv. 20. In like manner, we have *Enoch* and *Henoch*; *Jared* and *Jered*; *Perez* and *Pharez*; *Ai* and *Hai*; and even *Jonathan* and *Jehonathan*, with many others. It is obvious that such diversities cannot but prove perplexing, and that the same persons and places, as often as they recur, should be spoken of under the same appellation.

Isaiah v. 7. This passage may be briefly noticed as containing one of those striking *assonances*, or jingles of sound, so frequent in the writings of *Isaiah*. It is very desirable, if possible, to preserve these in translating into English, though that can very rarely be done without some sacrifice of the sense. No endeavour is here made in our common version to imitate the jingle of the original. That has, however, been attempted as follows:—

"He looked for *reason*, but behold *treason*;
For *right*, but behold *fright*."

But this sacrifices the sense to the sound, and the cost of reproducing the assonance in English has therefore been well described as "too dear."* A more satisfactory effort has been made by the

* *Revision of the Old Test.*, by Dr. Davidson, p. 52.

English translator of Ewald's Commentary on Isaiah:—

“He waited for *right*, but behold *might*;
For *exactness*, but behold *exaction*.”

Isaiah vii. 14—16. This passage is, in several parts, erroneously given in our Authorised Version. It should stand as follows:—

14. “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign :
Behold, the young woman shall conceive and bear a son,
And shall call His name Immanuel.
15. Cream and honey shall He eat,
When He shall know to refuse the evil and choose the
good ;
16. For ere the boy knoweth to refuse the evil and choose the
good,
The land before whose two kings thou tremblest shall
be desolate.”

Isaiah viii. 19, 20. The 20th verse runs as follow in our Authorised Version:—“To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them ;” and the passage is very frequently quoted in support of the supreme authority of Scripture. But it is certain that our translation is wrong, and the verses should stand something like this:—

19. “And if they shall say unto you,
Enquire of the ghost-seers and of the magicians,
That chirp and that mutter ;

(Shall not a people apply to their gods,
To the dead instead of the living?)

20. [Reply] To the doctrine and to the oracle !
Do not they speak according to this word,
For whom there is no morning brightness ?”

Isaiah ix. 1. This verse ought to belong to chap. viii., and should be translated as follows:—“Yet there is not darkness where is (now) distress: as the former time brought shame to the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, so the latter time brings honour (to the district) beside the sea, beyond Jordan, the circuit of the heathen.”

These may suffice as specimens of the alterations required in detached passages. I shall now set before the reader a whole chapter more exactly rendered than in our common version. And I shall select the familiar fifty-third chapter, as in some respects the most interesting in the whole book. The reader will mark the departures from the Authorised Version. These are not very numerous or important, even when chap. lii. 13—15 is taken with chap. liii., as is now generally and properly done:—

- lii. 13. “Behold, my servant shall be successful :
He shall be lofty, and exalted, and be very high.
14. Just as many were amazed at thee—
His visage was so marred more than any man,
And His form more than the sons of men—
15. So will He make many nations joyful ;
Kings shall shut their mouths before Him,

For that which had not been told them shall they see,
And that which they had not heard shall they understand.

liii. 1. Who believed our report ?

And to whom was the arm of the Lord revealed ?

2. He grew up before him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of a dry ground,
He had no form nor comeliness, that we should behold
Him,
And no beauty that we should desire Him.

3. He was despised and rejected of men,
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ;
And as one who hideth his countenance before us,
He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

4. Surely He bare our ills,
And laid our sorrows upon Himself ;
Yet we did deem Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.

5. But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities ;
The chastisement of our peace was upon Him,
And with His stripes we were healed.

6. All we like sheep had gone astray,
We had turned every one to his own way,
And the Lord caused to fall on Him the iniquity of
us all.

7. Oppressed was He, yet He humbled himself,
And opened not His mouth.
He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter,
And was dumb as a sheep before her shearers,
And opened not His mouth.

8. He was taken from prison and from judgment ;
And in His generation who considered
That He was taken away from the land of the living,
That for the transgression of my people He was stricken?

9. He had His grave with the wicked,
And was with the godless in His death,
Although He had done no injustice,
And there was no deceit in His mouth.
10. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him ;
He put Him to grief ;
But when He has made His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see His seed,
He shall prolong His days,
And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand,
11. Of the travail of His soul He shall see, He shall be
satisfied ;
By His wisdom shall my righteous servant justify many,
And He shall bear their iniquities.
12. Therefore I will allot Him a portion with the great,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong ;
Because that He poured out His soul unto death ;
And He was numbered with transgressors,
While He bare the sin of many,
And interceded for transgressors."

Jer. xvii. 9. This verse stands as follows in the Authorised Version :—" The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; who can know it ? " The translation " desperately wicked " is certainly too strong ; and has given rise to the charge that our translators were here influenced by dogmatic bias in the rendering which they adopted. This, however, is a charge which should not be made against any man, or body of men, except on grounds that can hardly be disputed. And perhaps it is not necessary to bring so grave an accusation against

the framers of our Authorised Version, because they gave such a strong rendering to the Hebrew word which occurs in this passage. That word properly means "seriously diseased," and, when used metaphorically, easily assumes the meaning which our translators have assigned it. But, while disposed to acquit them of any sinister motives in the rendering which they preferred, it must, at the same time, be admitted that the language used is unnecessarily, and even unjustifiably, strong. Human nature is not unfairly dealt with in the Bible. Its excellences, as well as its errors, are acknowledged; and it is certainly not the part of a lover of the truth either to depreciate the former or to exaggerate the latter. Aiming at absolute accuracy, which shall neither go beyond, nor fall short of, the meaning of the original, the verse before us may be rendered—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and depraved: who can know it?"

Ezek. xxvii. 11. The translation of this verse, found in our Authorised Version, affords an opportunity of calling attention to a pretty large class of errors which exists in it. Not unfrequently words have been regarded as proper names, and left standing in their original form, when they might and ought to have been translated. This is the case with the term "Gammadims," which occurs in the verse before us.

‘The Gammadims,’ it is said, “were in thy towers;” while the real meaning is, “heroes were in thy towers.” In the same way, instead of “the book of Jasher,” we ought to read “the book of the pious,” or “upright”; and “men of Belial” should simply be referred to as “wicked,” or “worthless men.” The converse error, however, has at times been committed; and the names of places have been translated as if they were common nouns. So is it, for instance, with “Bethel” in Judges xx. 26, which is rendered, according to its etymology, “the house of God,” but should have been left untranslated; with “No-Ammon,” in Nahum iii. 8, which is translated as “populous No,” but should not have been changed; and especially with the word “Lehi,” in Judges xv. 19, where we read that “God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout,” whereas the translation should be, “And God clave the hollow place that is in Lehi, and there came water thereout.”*

Hosea iv. 18. This verse may be regarded as representative of the many difficulties and obscurities which are found in *Hosea*. The common rendering, “Her rulers with shame do love, Give ye,” is certainly not right, and is, indeed, almost unintelligible.

* *Bible Revision*, by members of the American Revision Committee, p. 64.

But it is not easy to suggest anything in its place. The literal translation of the clause probably is, "Her shields with eager desire are in love with shame," and the expression "shields," being used as a metaphor for "defenders," the rendering will be, "Her rulers are ardently in love with shame."

Hosea xiv. 8. In the Authorised Version, this verse stands as follows:—"Ephraim (shall say), What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard (him) and observed him. I (am) like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found." But, as Jehovah is the speaker in the context, it is most unnatural to introduce Ephraim as making the declaration thus ascribed to him. The rendering of the verse should rather be, "Ephraim, what have I any more to do with idols? (*i.e.*, in reproving thee on account of them, since Israel has returned to Jehovah.) I have answered, and will watch^r over him. I am like a green cypress tree. From me is thy fruit received."

Joel iii. 4. The word "Palestine" employed in this verse is apt to prove misleading: it should rather be *Philistia*. The "coasts," or "borders," or, more literally, "circles" of *Philistia*, refer to the five Philistine principalities—Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron. It may be added generally, that there are not a few such geographical errors in our common version, which plainly require correction.

Hab. iii. 1—16. This is a very sublime, though somewhat irregular and obscure passage. It certainly admits of being rendered with greater precision than in our Authorised Version. We must acknowledge, however, to begin with, that it is impossible to say with any certainty what is the meaning of the term *Shigionoth*, which stands at the head of the chapter. It probably denotes an ode of the kind corresponding to the Greek dithyrambic poetry, as seen in Pindar.

1. "A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, in lofty strains.
2. O Lord, I have heard the report of Thee, [and] am afraid ;
O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years :
In the midst of the years make known :
In wrath remember mercy.
3. God comes from Teman,
And the Holy One from Mount Paran. *Selah (Pause).*
His splendour covers the heavens,
And the earth is full of His praise.
4. And His brightness is as the sun-light ;
Rays stream forth from His hand ;
And there is the hiding of His power.
5. Before Him goes the pestilence,
And a burning plague issues at His feet.
6. He stands, and measures the earth ;
He looks, and makes nations tremble ;
And the everlasting mountains are shattered ;
The perpetual hills sink low :
His ways are everlasting.
7. I see the tents of Cushan in distress ;
The tent curtains of the land of Midian tremble.

8. Burns Thy wrath, O Lord, against the rivers?
Is Thine anger against the rivers?
Is Thy fury against the sea,
That Thou dost ride upon Thy horses,
In Thy chariots of victory?
9. Thy bow is made entirely bare ;
Chastisements sworn by the word [are inflicted]. *Pause.*
Thou dividest the earth with rivers.
10. The mountains see Thee ; they tremble :
A flood of water passes over ;
The abyss utters its voice ;
It lifts up its hands on high.
11. Sun and moon stand still in their habitation,
On account of the light of Thy fast-flying arrows,
And the sheen of the lightning of Thy spear.
12. In anger Thou marchest through the earth ;
In wrath Thou treadest down nations.
13. Thou goest forth for the salvation of Thy people ;
For salvation to Thine anointed :
Thou shatterest the head from the house of the wicked,
Laying bare the foundation even to the neck. *Pause.*
14. Thou piercest with his own spears the chief of his
captains,
Who rush on as a tempest to scatter us ;
Their rejoicing is, as it were, to devour the afflicted in
secret.
15. Thou treadest upon the sea with Thy horses,
Upon the foam of many waters.
16. I heard, and my heart trembled ;
At the voice my lips quivered ;
Rottenness entered into my bones ;
My knees shake beneath me ;
Who am to wait quietly for the day of distress,
For the approach of him to the people, who is to oppress
them.

Several of the renderings in the above passage are little better than conjecture, and there seems to be no means of attaining certainty. The second clause of ver. 9 is especially doubtful, and it is said that more than a hundred different explanations of it have been proposed. In ver. 16, the word which I have translated "heart" is literally "belly." But that does not suit our idiom, and clearly ought to be replaced by a word which does so. Different nations have fixed upon various organs of the body, such as the bowels, the liver, and the heart, as the seat of emotion. It is mischievous in cases of the kind to aim at a literal translation, and the Authorised Version has erred considerably in this respect. So has it, I may add, in a kindred point—that of giving literal renderings of words and phrases, which, though not offensive to Oriental taste, are extremely so when transferred, just as they stand in the original, into our language. I may refer for an example to Gen. xxxiv. 30, and especially to 1 Sam. xxv. 22, and similar passages. In such cases, a literal translation is the most unfaithful of all translations. Indelicacy might easily be avoided, while the sense is preserved; and, if thought necessary, the literal meaning of the Hebrew might be placed on the margin, but it certainly ought not to appear in the text.

Haggai ii. 7. It is with no small reluctance that we find it necessary to relinquish the beautiful expression, "the Desire of all nations," which occurs in this verse. That title seems so exactly descriptive of Christ, and is so familiar to us in connection with Him as the long-expected Saviour, that we would fain retain it if we could. But it is simply an impossible rendering of the original. Almost every scholar of repute admits that such is the case, and the verse must be translated as follows:—

“ And I will shake all nations,
And the choice things of all nations shall come [to this house],
And I will fill this house with glory,
Saith the Lord of hosts.”

Zechariah xi. 13. This is a most difficult passage, when viewed in connection with its quotation by St. Matthew, chap. xxvii. 9. The evangelist departs widely both from the Hebrew and the Septuagint, and evidently quoted the passage in a loose sort of way from memory. Recent critics change the vowel pointing of the Hebrew, and thus exclude all mention of "the potter" from the passage. "Here," says Dr. Samuel Davidson, "we should read,—

“ ‘ And Jehovah said unto me,
Cast it into the treasury,
The splendid price at which I was valued by them.
So I took the thirty pieces of silver,
And cast them into the treasury in the house of Jehovah.

He adds, "A *potter* has no connection with the temple. By changing the last vowel of the word so rendered, we get *the treasury*, which is unquestionably correct. The word *potter*, however, has got into the passage as cited by St. Matthew; and not only so, but *field* along with it. This is peculiar adaptation, containing a departure both from the Septuagint and the Hebrew."* The passage well illustrates what I have said elsewhere as to the uncertainty sometimes caused by the fact that the vowels were not originally written in the Hebrew text, and also as to the manner in which quotations are sometimes made by the New Testament writers.†

Malachi iii. 1. A very simple but important correction requires to be made in this verse. Where "messenger" occurs the second time, we should read "angel;" and the passage will therefore stand thus: "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Angel of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He cometh, saith the Lord of hosts." In connection with this change, the following excellent remarks should be considered: "From a very early

* *Rev. of the Eng. Old Test.*, p. 62.

† See chaps. i., vii., ix.

period we find mention of an extraordinary Messenger, or Angel, who is sometimes called the *Angel of God*, at others, the *Angel of Jehovah*. He is represented as the Mediator between the invisible God and men in all God's communications and dealings with men. To this Angel, divine names, attributes, purposes, and acts are ascribed. He occasionally assumed a human form, as in His interviews with Hagar, Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, and his wife. He went before the camp of Israel on the night of the exodus. In Exodus xxiii. 20, Jehovah said, "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. My name is in him." In Isaiah lxiii. 9, he is called *the Angel of His presence*, or *face*, where there is a reference to Exod. xxxiii. 14, 15, where Jehovah said to Moses, "My presence (or Hebrew, *My face*) shall go with thee, and Moses said, If Thy face go not with us, carry us not up hence." He is called the *face of God*, because, though no man can see His face and live, yet the Angel of His face is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person. In Him Jehovah's presence is manifested, and His glory reflected; for the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ. There is thus a gradual development in the Old Testament of the doctrine of the incarnation, of the distinction of persons in the Godhead, not

brought to light fully, lest it should interfere with the doctrine of the unity of God." *

Taking these facts into account, we seem not only justified, but required, to translate as above by "Angel of the Covenant," in order to indicate the identity of the Person referred to with Him who, under similar appellations, is so often set before us in other passages of the Old Testament.

* Lange's *Commentary, in loc.* (edited by Dr. Schaff. *Malachi*, by Dr. Packard).

CHAPTER V.

THE HAGIOGRAPHIA.—CORRECTIONS OF THE AUTHORISED VERSION.

HERE again, nothing more can be attempted than to bring forward some of the more striking specimens of those alterations and improvements which require to be made in our current English translation. And in doing so, the books of Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Daniel will, in this chapter, briefly attract our consideration.

The Book of Psalms is, upon the whole, very well translated. Many felicities of rendering occur in it, which ought to be scrupulously preserved, even though it may be possible to make a somewhat closer approach to the meaning of the original. Who could bear to have the beautiful words of Ps. i. 3, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water," exchanged for "He shall be like a tree planted by the watercourses," or the striking statement of Ps. xlv. 5, "God shall help her, and that right early," altered into "God shall help her at

the turning of the morning"? The Psalms are, next to the Gospels, that portion of Scripture which has most securely taken possession of the hearts of readers, and the renderings of the book with which we have become familiar ought not, if possible, to be disturbed. Still, there are cases in which faithfulness to the original demands correction, and to some of these our attention will now be directed.

Psalm ii. 12. There can be no doubt as to the Messianic character of this psalm. That is abundantly plain from its own internal structure, as well as from the use which is made of it in the New Testament (Acts iv. 25, etc.). But we must not on that account press for Messianic allusions, where the language does not naturally bear such an interpretation. Now, I do not think that the translation found in ver. 12, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry," is a correct representation of the original. Several reasons might be assigned for this conclusion. Of these I shall only mention one which will be obvious to the English reader, that it is *the Lord* who is the subject of the passage, and that it is most improbable that a different person should here be introduced. In accordance, therefore, with the tenor of the passage itself, and with the ancient interpretations of it, we should read it as follows:—

10. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings :
Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11. Serve the Lord with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
12. Worship purely, lest He be angry, and ye perish from
the way ;
For quickly will His anger be kindled.”*

Psalm xvi. 1—4. Every reader has probably noticed the obscurity which surrounds this passage as it stands in the Authorised Version It is as follows :—

1. “ Preserve me, O God : for in Thee do I put my trust.
2. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my
Lord :
My goodness extendeth not to thee ;
3. But to the saints that are in the earth,
And to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.
4. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another
god :
Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer,
Nor take up their names into my lips.”

The unsatisfactory character of this translation

* While agreeing with Dr. S. Davidson as to the change of translation required in this psalm, I regret that he denies, surely against very strong evidence, its Messianic character. He says . “ This psalm is quoted in the New Testament, and applied to Messiah by the early Christian disciples in Jerusalem (Acts iv. 25) ; by Paul (Acts xiii. 33) ; and by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 5). We may therefore presume that it was the current interpretation of the day. Yet internal evidence is against the exposition.” (*Introd. to the Old Test.*, ii. 281.) His view of this psalm seems to have influenced the judgment which he expresses regarding Daniel ix. 25, in his *Revision of the English Old Testament*, p. 54.

is admitted by every scholar. But the greatest difficulty is felt in replacing it by something better. Upon the whole, the following version of the passage seems to me as near an approach to the meaning as can be reached:—

1. “ Preserve me, O God : for in Thee do I put my trust.
2. I have said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord ;
My prosperity is not above (independent of) Thee :
3. To the saints [also] who are in the land [I have said the same],
And to the noble, in whom is all my delight.
4. Their sorrows shall be multiplied, who hasten elsewhere ;
I will not pour out their drink offerings of blood,
And will not take their names upon my lips.”

The obvious intention of the psalmist is to place in the strongest possible contrast his own conduct in making Jehovah the only object of his trust, to that of others who had recourse to the worship of idols. According to the translation given above, he declares both to God and man—to Jehovah in heaven, and to the saints on earth, that his choice was decisively made, and that he would have nothing whatever to do with those false gods in whom others trusted. A coherent meaning seems thus imparted to the verses. But the passage has been the despair of interpreters, and a great variety of renderings still strive for acceptance at the present day.

Psalm xix. 1—4. It seems preferable to strike out the supplementary adverb here inserted in the

Authorised Version, and to read the passage as follows :—

1. “ The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament sheweth His handiwork.
2. Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night sheweth knowledge.
3. There is no speech and no language :
Their voice is not heard : [yet]
4. Their line is gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.”

The meaning of ver. 3, when thus translated, is that nature utters no audible voice, but yet, without any words, powerfully proclaims her lessons to the reflecting mind. The idea, in short, is just that so beautifully expressed by Addison, when he says respecting the orbs of heaven,—

“ In *reason's ear* they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious *voice*,
For ever singing, as they shine,
‘ The hand that made us is divine.’ ”

Psalm xxiv. 6. There is an obvious incongruity in this verse, as it stands in the Authorised Version,—

“ This is the generation of them that seek him,
That seek thy face, O Jacob.”

The second line should either be read thus,—

That seek Thy face, [of the house of] Jacob ;

or,

That seek Thy face, [O God of] Jacob.

Psalm lxxxiv. 4—7. This passage should be corrected as follows:—

4. “Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house;
Continually do they praise Thee. *Pause.*
5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee,
Whose thoughts are of the pilgrim-ways.
6. Passing through the valley of weeping,
They make it a place of fountains;
Yea, the early rain covers it with blessings.
7. They go from strength to strength:
They appear [at length] before God in Zion.”

Psalm cxxiv. 3. The word “quick” is very apt to be misunderstood in this verse, as if it stood for *quickly*. It really means *alive*, as in Heb. iv. 12; and the unambiguous rendering is, “Then had they swallowed us up alive.”

Psalm cxxvii. 2. The common translation of the last clause of this verse is, “For so He giveth His beloved sleep.” But this seems erroneous, and the verse should probably stand thus:—

“It is vain for you to rise up early,
And that ye lie down late;
That ye eat the bread of sorrows;
So giveth He it to His beloved sleeping.”

The meaning is, that all the blessings for which others toil so hard are freely bestowed by the Lord upon His beloved, without effort on their part, and unexpectedly, as in a dream.

There are a number of other slight improvements which admit of being made in the common version of the Book of Psalms. But, as has already been suggested, it is, upon the whole, exceedingly well translated; and the familiar English forms to which we are accustomed in reading it are too sacred to be lightly tampered with. The case is very different with the Book of Job, to which we now proceed. This book must always be felt interesting and sublime, even in the worst translation. But it certainly is most obscure and enigmatical in many passages, as presented in our Authorised Version. I shall now bring forward some of these passages, leaving, of necessity, many others unnoticed, though they perhaps stand equally in need of correction.

Job iv., v. These chapters contain the first and most important speech of Eliphaz. It is allowed on all hands to be a masterpiece. The greatest skill appears in its composition, when it is carefully considered. It bears, of course, chiefly upon the patriarch's complaints contained in the third chapter. Job's sin is evidently assumed by the speaker as the only possible explanation of his calamities, but the thought is not painfully obtruded: there is a desire evinced to spare the sufferer, while dealing faithfully with him, and to win him to repentance, rather by suggesting the Divine majesty and mercy, than

by pressing home the charge of his own guilt. The speech is throughout one continued climax, ascending from a lower to a higher step in the argument; "rising," to use the words of an eminent German critic, "from the faint whisper and tune of the summer wind to the loud and irresistible thunder of the wintry storm." The following is perhaps a more adequate translation of it than that contained in our Authorised Version :—

1. " Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,
2. If one venture on a word with thee, wilt thou be offended ?
But who can restrain himself from speaking ?
3. Behold, thou hast instructed many,
And thou hast strengthened the feeble hands.
4. Thy words have upheld him that was tottering,
And thou hast sustained the sinking knees.
5. But now it cometh upon thyself, and thou faintest ;
It toucheth thine own person, and thou art confounded.
6. Is not thy pious fear thy confidence ?
Thy hope, is it not the uprightness of thy ways ?
7. Think now : who ever perished, being innocent ?
And where have the righteous been cut off ?
8. According as I have seen, those who plough iniquity,
And sow mischief, reap the same.
9. By the breath of God they perish,
By the blast of His anger they vanish away.
10. The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the hoarse lion,
And the teeth of the young lions are rooted out.
11. The old lion perishes for lack of prey ;
And the whelps of the lioness are scattered abroad.
12. Moreover, a word came to me stealthily,
And my ear caught a whisper thereof,

13. In thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falleth upon men ;
14. Fear came upon me, and trembling,
And caused all my bones to shake.
15. Then a spirit passed before my face ;
The hair of my flesh stood up.
16. It stood, but I discerned not its aspect ;
A form was before mine eyes ;
A gentle * rustling, and I heard a voice :
17. Is mortal man more just than God ?
Is great man more pure than He who made him ?
18. Behold, He trusteth not in His servants,
And His angels He chargeth with folly ;
19. How much more them that dwell in houses of clay,
The foundation of which is in the dust !
They are crushed before the moth.
20. From morning till evening they are broken in pieces :
Utterly unnoticed, they perish for ever.
21. Doth not their glory pass away with them ?
They die, and not in wisdom.
- v. 1. Call now ! Does any one answer thee ?
And to which of the holy ones dost thou turn ?
2. For grief slays the foolish man,
And envy destroys the simple.
3. I myself saw a fool taking root,
But speedily I cursed his habitation.
4. His children were far from safety,
And were crushed in the gate, with none to deliver them.
5. His harvest did the hungry man eat,
And took it even from within the enclosures,
While greedy robbers swallowed up his wealth.
6. For trouble cometh not forth from the dust,
Nor does affliction spring out of the ground ;

* Exactly—" Scarce more than silence is, and yet a sound."—
The Spanish Student, by Longfellow.

7. But man is born unto sorrow,
Even as the sparks fly upward.
8. Truly I would seek unto God,
And to God would I commit my cause,
9. Who doeth great things beyond all search,
Yea, marvellous things without number ;
10. Who giveth rain upon the earth,
And sendeth waters upon the fields :
11. To set up on high those that are low ;
And the mourning are exalted to safety.
12. He bringeth to nought the devices of the crafty,
So that their hands cannot accomplish their purpose ;
13. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness,
And the counsel of the cunning is hurried to ruin.
14. Even by day they stumble in darkness,
And at noonday they grope as in the night.
15. And he saveth from the sword, from their mouth,
Yea from the hand of the mighty—the poor.
16. So to the feeble arises hope ;
And iniquity shutteth her mouth.
17. Lo, blessed is the man whom God correcteth ;
Despise not thou, therefore, the chastening of the
Almighty.
18. For though He woundeth, He also bindeth up ;
Though He smiteth, yet His hands make whole.
19. In six troubles He shall deliver thee ;
Yea, in seven, no evil shall touch thee.
20. In famine, He shall redeem thee from death ;
And in war from the power of the sword.
21. When the tongue smiteth, thou shalt be hidden ;
And thou shalt not fear destruction when it comes.
22. At devastation and at famine thou shalt laugh,
And thou shalt not be afraid of the beasts of the earth ;
23. For thou art in covenant with the stones of the field,
And the beasts of the field are at peace with thee.

24. So shalt thou know that thy tent is in peace,
Thou shalt inspect thy household, and find nothing gone.
25. Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be many,
And thine offspring as the grass of the earth.
26. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,
As a sheaf of corn cometh in its season.
27. Lo, this [is the truth] : we have closely examined it ;
Thus stands the case : O hear it, and apply it to thyself."

Job xix. 25—27. This is a specially interesting passage, from the reference which it has usually been supposed to contain to a coming Messiah. As was formerly remarked on *Gen.* xlix. 10, it is rather a recommendation than otherwise of the rendering which is given of an Old Testament passage, if, when the words are naturally and fairly translated, they are found to be of a Messianic character. In the present case, I have no doubt as to the reference ; and I think the following a pretty correct representation of the original :—

25. " For I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And that He shall stand hereafter upon the dust ;
26. And though after my skin, this [body] is destroyed,
Yet out of my flesh shall I see God ;
27. Whom I shall see for myself,
And mine eyes shall behold Him, and not another :
My veins faint with longing within me."

It is not to be denied that much uncertainty exists as to the exact meaning of this passage. The only point of which I am fully persuaded is that it is

Messianic in character. When it was uttered, the speaker was evidently in a state of high spiritual exultation. He had entered that region of undefined yet glorious hope, which was, from time to time, penetrated by the Old Testament saints. They saw that a great Deliverer was to come; and however vague the notions respecting Him to which they attained, they found enough in these to lift them above present sufferings, and convey the strongest consolation to their hearts. So it was with Job on this occasion. He now got a glimpse of his future Redeemer, and of the close relation in which he himself stood to that great and gracious Being, which filled his soul, for the moment, with ecstatic delight, and prevented him from ever again sinking into those depths of misery and despair, of which he had previously had so painful an experience.

Job xxxiii. 23, 24. This passage also is a peculiarly interesting one, for the same reason as that which has just been considered. Here, again, we appear to be admitted within the circle of those Messianic ideas, which seem, unquestionably, to have been disseminated among the Semitic peoples at a very early date. The proper translation of the passage appears to be as follows; but it is right to state that the greatest diversity of opinion prevails among scholars on the subject:—

23. " If there is for him an angel, a mediator,
One from among a thousand,
To declare unto man that which is right,
24. Then will He be gracious unto him, and say,
Deliver him from going down into the pit ;
I have found a ransom."

It is obvious that there is much vagueness about the ideas here expressed. But it is also, I think, evident that the germs of evangelical truth exist in the passage. And if a primitive revelation of a coming Saviour was indeed made to mankind, we should expect it to be wrapped, for a long time, in obscurity, and only to grow in clearness with succeeding generations. All the doctrines of Scripture have had a *history*, coming home to the human consciousness very dimly at first, but being evolved and brought into prominence with the lapse of time. The Book of Job, in particular, seems to abound in those seminal thoughts which were developed and exhibited clearly in the later books of Scripture.

Job xxxvi. 29—33. As this passage stands in the Authorised Version, it seems perfectly unintelligible. It runs,—

29. " Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds,
Or the noise of His tabernacle ?
30. Behold, He spreadeth His light upon it,
And covereth the bottom of the sea.
31. For by them judgeth He the people ;
He giveth meat in abundance.

32. With clouds He covereth the light ;
And commandeth it not to shine
By the cloud that cometh betwixt.
33. The noise thereof showeth concerning it,
The cattle also concerning the vapour."

No word need be said to prove that this cannot be the correct translation, since it is, in fact, little better than nonsense. But there is very great difficulty in proposing anything satisfactory in its place. I diffidently suggest the following:—

29. " And can any understand the outspreading of the clouds,
Or the fearful thunderings in His pavilion ?
30. Behold, He flashes His lightnings over it,
While He darkeneth the abysses of the sea.
31. For by these means He ruleth the nations,
By these also He provides food in abundance ;
32. With His hands He covereth the lightning,
And commandeth it where to strike.
33. He pointeth out to it His friends ;
His wrath collects over the wicked."

This last verse is most variously interpreted ; and its difficulty will be apparent to the reader, when the following version of it is set before him, as equally probable with that given above:—

" His thundering announces Him :
The cattle even [tell] of His approach."

Prov. viii. 22—31. This is perhaps the most interesting and important passage in the whole Book of

Proverbs. It is very fairly rendered in our common version, but is well worthy of an attempt at a still more exact translation. I venture to give it as follows:—

22. “ The Lord created me as the beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.
23. I was set up from everlasting,
From the beginning, before the foundation of the earth.
24. While as yet there were no depths, I was brought forth,
While there were no fountains abounding with water.
25. Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills was I brought forth ;
26. While as yet He had not made earth and plains,
And the first of the dust of the world.
27. When He prepared the heavens, I was there,
When He set a compass over the face of the deep,
28. When He established the clouds above,
When the fountains of the deep violently burst forth ;
29. When He gave to the sea its decree,
That the waters should not pass over their bounds,
When He appointed the foundations of the earth,
30. Then was I beside Him as the worker,
And was His delight day by day,
While I rejoiced before Him continually,
31. Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth,
And my delights were with the sons of men.’

Two extreme views have been taken of the meaning of this passage. Some have found in it as clear a revelation of the Logos doctrine as that which is contained in the New Testament. But this is absurd, and contrary to the whole analogy of Scripture. As

has been already remarked, every doctrine has been marked by growth and development; and, as the very opening of this passage shows, the writer had only an imperfect conception of the truth afterwards revealed. All Hebrew scholars agree at the present day, that the word in ver. 22, translated "possessed" in our English version, must have the meaning "created" given it; and this is out of harmony with the Logos doctrine, as taught by St. John and other writers of the New Testament. But, on the other hand, some have seen in this passage nothing more than a personification of Divine wisdom. This is clearly to fall short of the meaning, as several expressions show. The word translated "set up" in ver. 23 might perhaps be rendered "was consecrated;" and a vague personal reference, at least, would then suggest itself to the reader. But this is far more obvious and certain in ver. 31, where the acts of *rejoicing* and *delighting* spoken of point unmistakably to a person. The whole passage is thus an adumbration of the Messiah, and may properly be used in illustration of what is more clearly revealed in other parts of Scripture respecting Christ.

Prov. xi. 16. This passage is here referred to, as exhibiting the amendments which may occasionally be made on the Hebrew text by means of the Greek version. The Septuagint inserts two lines which are not in the Hebrew; and, in the opinion of the

best critics, these lines are genuine. They have a ring of truthfulness and propriety about them, which makes it difficult to imagine them the invention of a later age. The reader will observe how admirably they complete the parallelism :—

“A gracious woman acquireth honour,
[But a seat of disgrace is she that hateth righteousness ;
The idle become destitute of substance,]
But the diligent acquire riches.”

It may be observed, generally, that the Hebrew text of the Book of Proverbs is in a most unsatisfactory state. Nor can much be done for it, till critical editions of the ancient versions are accessible. This point will be found adverted to in subsequent chapters.*

Ecclesiastes xii. 1—7. This is, probably, the most striking passage in the book, and I shall here endeavour to give it a more accurate rendering than that which stands in our Authorised Version.

1. “Remember, then, thy Creator in the days of thy youth ;
Before the days of evil are come, and the years draw nigh,
When thou shalt say, There is no pleasure in them :
2. While the sun, the dawn, the moon, and the stars are not
darkened,
Nor the clouds return after the rain :
3. In the day when the keepers of the house tremble,
And its strong men bow themselves,

* See chaps. vii., viii.

- And the grinders fail both in strength and numbers ;
 And those that look out of the windows are darkened ;
4. And the doors on the street are shut ;
 And the sound of the mill is faintly heard,
 Although the man rises at the voice of the bird,
 And all the daughters of music are brought low ;
5. When he is afraid, too, of that which is high ;
 And terrors are in the way :
 And the almond tree blossoms ;
 And the grasshopper is felt a burden ;
 And all desire fails ;
 (For thus man goeth to his long home,
 And the mourners walk about the streets ;)
6. Before the silver cord is loosed,
 And the golden bowl is broken,
 And the pitcher shattered at the fountain,
7. And the wheel broken at the cistern ;
 And the dust returns to the earth as it was,
 And the spirit returns to God who gave it."

There is in this passage an elaborate and highly poetical comparison of the human body to a house.* The following brief explanation of the metaphors employed may be useful: In ver. 3, "the keepers of the house" appear to denote the *arms*, "the strong men" the *legs*, "the grinders" the *teeth*, and "those that look out of the windows" the *eyes*. In ver. 4, it seems best to regard the allusions throughout to be to the *ears*. The sense of hearing

* The classical scholar will remember the striking use which the Roman dramatist Plautus makes of the same image in the *Mostellaria*, act i., sc. 2.

has grown dull with age, yet the voice of the bird in the morning has power to awake the light sleeper, while no pleasure is any longer felt in music. In ver. 5, "the almond tree," with its white blossoms, denotes the hoariness of age; and the last two clauses appear to be best taken as a parenthesis. In ver. 6, "the silver cord" denotes *the thread of life*; "the golden bowl" has reference to the body as a *vessel* containing the *life blood*; "the shattered pitcher" suggests, in particular, the destruction of the organs of respiration; and "the wheel broken at the cistern" implies the cessation of that cyclic action by which life, while it endures, is maintained. Finally, in ver. 7, we find a plain description of the last solemn event, which has, in the previous verse, been set forth under such varied imagery.

Daniel ix. 24—27. This is one of the most remarkable passages in the Old Testament. As it stands in our Authorised Version, it forms the very climax and crown of the Messianic predictions. There is a definiteness about it which belongs to no other passage, and, on this very account, it has been discredited in the estimation of certain critics. As is well known, the authenticity of the Book of Daniel has been flatly denied by not a few modern scholars. But it has also been most ably defended. We are not here called upon to discuss the question;

all we have to do with is the correctness of the translation.* Very different versions of the passage before us have been proposed, many of which completely strip it of all reference to the Messiah. But, after taking everything into account, I venture to present the following as a fair and accurate translation of the verses :—

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of the sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint a thing most holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that, from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah Prince shall be seven weeks; and for sixty and two weeks it shall be restored and built up with streets and walls, yet in times of trouble. And, after the sixty and two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off, and no one [shall stand] by Him; and the people of a prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and his end shall be in the flood, yet war shall be to the end, according to decreed desolations. And He shall make firm a covenant with the many for one week, and, during half of the week, He shall cause sacrifice and oblation to cease, and on the wing of abominations shall make desolate, even till the end, and till the appointed judgment shall be poured upon the desolator.”

* While not entering on the question of authenticity, the words of Hävernicks may be quoted: “The book appears in a collection which contains no other prophet. Hence we conclude that this position was assigned to the prophet deliberately. Were the book an interpolated one, it would, doubtless, have been smuggled into the collection of the prophets.” (Quoted by Auberlen, *Daniel*, etc., p. 26.)

I do not, of course, enter upon any exposition of this most striking passage. Comments without number have been written upon it, and many different views have been expressed as to its import. After a careful consideration of the chief of these, and after endeavouring to translate the original as accurately as possible, I must here be content to say, that no interpretation seems to me to do justice to the meaning of the passage, which does not admit its Messianic character.



CHAPTER VI

THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

IT is to be regretted, in several respects, that the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament have been so little read in this country. Many of them abound in excellent matter. To these books indeed, more justly than to the work which drew forth the words, may the saying be applied, that if in them the silvery peal of inspiration is no longer heard, its vibration still lingers in the air, and serves both to charm the ear and delight the heart. Reference will be made to some of these striking and edifying passages in the sequel; while it must, at the same time, be acknowledged, that not a little of the contents of the Apocryphal books is of the most puerile character, and utterly unworthy of being set side by side with the canonical Scriptures.

But, besides the intrinsic excellence of much of the Apocrypha, it has a special value as forming a connecting link between the Old and New Testaments. The literature of the several books reflects the feelings which prevailed among the Jews during those

centuries which elapsed between the return from the captivity and the advent of Christ; while the history which some of them contains, fills up what must otherwise have been little better than a blank in Israelitish history. From the almost total neglect of the Apocrypha which has prevailed in Britain, many even of the educated and intelligent classes among us have but a very vague and confused notion of its contents, and consequently are but slightly acquainted with the fortunes and feelings of the Jewish people between the times of Nehemiah and Christ. It is to be hoped that the revision of the text and translation of the Apocrypha, which, it is understood, will be added to the revised version of the Old and New Testaments, may attract to it many more readers, and thus lead to a more general acquaintance with a very interesting and stirring period in the history of the Jews.

The following is a list of the books which are generally reckoned as constituting the Apocrypha* of the Old Testament:—

1. The First Book of Esdras,
 2. The Second Book of Esdras.
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* There is no doubt that *Apocrypha* is a Greek word, meaning “hidden,” but it is not easy to explain how this came to acquire the sense of *spurious*. See the various explanations in Smith’s *Dict. of Bible*, art. Apocrypha.

3. The Book of Tobit.
3. The Book of Judith.
5. Additions to the Book of Esther.
6. The Book of Wisdom.
7. Ecclesiasticus, or, the Book of the Son of Sirach.
8. The Book of Baruch.
9. Additions to the Book of Daniel.
10. The Prayer of Manasseh.
11. The First Book of Maccabees.
12. The Second Book of Maccabees.

I shall now give a brief account of these books separately, with any remarks which they may naturally draw forth, and then say a few words with respect to the Apocrypha as a whole.

1. *The First Book of Esdras* is called the third in Article VI. of the Church of England, because the Latin Bible has there been followed. In the Vulgate, the canonical books of Ezra and Nehemiah are styled First and Second Esdras respectively, and hence the book with which we have now to deal is called the third. The general object of this book is to give an account of the restoration of the Temple. Its most important and only independent portion is comprised in chaps. iii.—v. 6. This section embraces a discussion of the question as to *what is mightiest*. The decision is at last given in favour of

Truth; and there is a noble passage (chap. iv. 38—41) to the following effect: "As for the truth, it endureth, and is always strong; and it liveth and ruleth for evermore. With her there is no accepting of persons or making of distinctions; but she doeth the things that are just, and refraineth from all unjust and wicked things; and all men take pleasure in her works, and there is nothing unrighteous in her judgment. And she is the strength, and the kingdom, and the power, and the majesty of all ages. Blessed be the God of truth. And he ceased from speaking, And thereupon all the people shouted, and then said, Great is truth, and mighty above all things." It is worthy of notice that the last clause of this passage has given rise to the oft-quoted proverb, "*Magna est veritas, et prævalebit.*" Many make use of that saying, who have not the least idea whence it is derived. As the clause stands in the Latin version, it runs thus, "*Magna est veritas et prævalet,*" and this is an exact rendering of the Greek original. But in some way or other, and as if to indicate that Truth has generally to wait a considerable time for victory, the present has been exchanged for the future, so that for *prævalet* we invariably find *prævalebit*.

Apart from the independent and original part of the book just noticed, the statements which it contains are exceedingly confused and inconsistent,

besides being hopelessly irreconcilable with those of the canonical Scriptures. Josephus, however, attached importance to them, and makes no small use of the book. Its author was probably a Jew of Palestine, and its original language Greek, though some writers have brought forward objections to both these opinions. The period of its composition cannot be definitely fixed, but may confidently be placed in the first or second century before Christ.

It must be regarded as a strange fact, that the Church of Rome, while embracing so many of the books of the Apocrypha in the canon of Scripture, by a decree of the Council of Trent, excluded this Book of Esdras. Certainly, several others were pronounced canonical, which seem to have much weaker claims to be so recognised than this one. Probably the reason for its exclusion was twofold; first, that Jerome has spoken disparagingly of it, and secondly, that the Council did not know of its existence in the Greek language.

2. *The Second Book of Esdras* is styled the fourth in the Articles of the Church of England, for the reason indicated above. This book belongs to the Jewish Apocalyptic literature. It is to be reckoned with such productions as the Book of Enoch (Jude 14). Both contain professed revelations,

though of a very different character. The Book of Enoch is jubilant and exulting, while second Esdras is gloomy in the extreme. Neither book was of old admitted into the canon of Scripture, and both have been rejected in modern times, alike by Catholics and Protestants.

This Second Book of Esdras contains a number of visions referring to the Messiah. By means of these we approximate towards the date of the book, which may be somewhat doubtfully fixed about the last decade of the first century of our era. Its original language was certainly Greek, but it is now known only through five ancient versions,—Latin, Syriac, Æthiopic, Arabic, and Armenian. The multitude of these early translations of the book testifies to its great popularity in the primitive Church; and while it has always been excluded from the canon, it is still numbered in our own country among those writings which may be read “for examples of life.”

3. *The Book of Tobit.* This is a very interesting as well as edifying book. Some of the details which it contains may, indeed, appear to our taste grotesque and repulsive, but they are quite in keeping with the literature of the East. The book was evidently a very great favourite in ancient times. This is plain from the simple fact that it has come

down to us in three Greek forms, three Latin, two Hebrew, one Syriac, and one Chaldaic. There is nothing but a deep-rooted, though baseless, prejudice as to the literary language of Palestine at the time of its composition, to give birth to any doubt that it was originally composed in the Greek language.* Its most probable date is towards the close of the period of the Maccabees.

The story of the book is told in a very simple but graphic fashion. There is one touch in it which is perhaps unique in Jewish literature. As every reader of Scripture knows, dogs are generally spoken of by Hebrew writers with contempt, and are never referred to as *companions* of man, while, metaphorically, the name is often employed to denote all that is evil. But in Tobit v. 16, we read respecting Tobit and the angel, that "they went forth both, and *the young man's dog with them.*" Some have suspected that the last clause is an interpolation, but on no sufficient grounds; and it should rather be welcomed as one passage which redeems the dog from the general dislike or disgust with which he is usually spoken of in Oriental literature.

Till the Reformation, the Book of Tobit was regarded as a real history, and is, indeed, frequently quoted by the Fathers as one of the canonical

* See afterwards, in chaps. viii., ix.

Scriptures. But it is now regarded by almost all scholars as not being strictly historical: it is rather looked upon as a didactic and religious romance. But this does not detract from its great merits. Luther, while pronouncing it a fiction, justly described it as "a book useful for Christian reading." Its delineation of the family relations is of the most pleasing character. Of course, extravagances appear in it, as in regard to the exaggerated importance it attaches to almsgiving and fasting, and the views of the ministry of angels which it presents. But its moral tone is uniformly high, and there is not a little spiritual elevation in the beautiful hymn contained in chap. xiii. The book was included among the canonical writings by the Council of Trent.

4. *The Book of Judith.* This book, like that of Tobit, must be regarded as an historical romance. Some, like the illustrious scholar Grotius, have deemed it an allegory, and found a significance in the names of all the characters that appear in it. But this requires considerable straining, though it may be admitted that several of the appellations given to the personages which figure in it were selected on account of the meaning which their derivation suggests. In its mere literary form, the book has a special interest as being one of the earliest of

historical fictions. And, as has been well remarked, its "value is not lessened by its fictitious character. On the contrary, it becomes even more valuable as exhibiting an ideal type of heroism, which was outwardly embodied in the wars of independence. The self-sacrificing faith and unscrupulous bravery of Judith were the qualities by which the champions of Jewish freedom were then enabled to overcome the power of Syria, which seemed at the time scarcely less formidable than the imaginary hosts of Holofernes. The peculiar character of the book, which is exhibited in these traits, affords the best indication of its date; for it cannot be wrong to refer its origin to the Maccabean period, which it reflects not only in its general spirit, but even in smaller traits."* Its date may thus be fixed about the middle of the second century before Christ; and its author was unquestionably a Jew of Palestine.

While there is much that is noble and inspiring in the Book of Judith, the character of its heroine can by no means be regarded as an ideal of female excellence. Her conduct was marked by the greatest duplicity, and her religion can be commended only by those who hold that "the end sanctifies the means." Jael seems to have been selected as her prototype; and if the treachery of that Kenite

* Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, art. Judith.

heroine, as described in the fourth chapter of the Book of Judges, is to be reprobated, whatever may be pleaded in her behalf, much more must the deception practised by Judith, and all the odious circumstances attending it, be subjected to the severest condemnation.

The book appears to have been originally written in Hebrew, from some seeming inaccuracies of rendering which occur in the Greek. But if so, the original was speedily lost in the translation; and the Greek version has been the source of all the forms in which the book has descended to our day.

5. *Additions to the Book of Esther.* These Additions are found woven into the text of the Septuagint version with much skill, so as in no way to interfere with the natural flow of the narrative. But in the common English version they appear in a very confused and absurd connection. The reason of this is, that the Authorised Version of 1611 slavishly followed the Latin Bible in the placing of these Additions. Now, when Jerome published his edition of the Vulgate, he first translated the Book of Esther as it stands in the Hebrew, without the passages in question, and then added them from the Greek version, indicating, at the same time, the particular parts of the history at which they should be taken in

and read. But, in course of time, Jerome's explanatory remarks were allowed to drop, and the Additions then remained as so many more chapters appended to the book. Hence the ridiculous order in which they stand. For instance, the verse which should be the very last in English and Latin, as it is in Greek, actually stands as the first of the so-called eleventh chapter; and the second verse of the same chapter should be the first verse of Addition I., which, comprising in all eighteen verses, is prefixed to the canonical book. Altogether there are seven Additions.

There is no doubt that these Additions were originally composed in Greek, but it is impossible to say who was their author. They are used by Josephus (*Antiq.* xi. 6, 1), and seem to have been prized as highly by the early Fathers as the rest of the book (*Clem. Rom.* i. 55; *Clem. Alex. Strom.* iv. 19).* The motive which led to their production appears to have been a desire to supplement supposed deficiencies in the Hebrew text. As is well known, the name of God does not occur in the whole of the canonical Book of Esther. But it is

* I desire here to refer, once for all, to the admirable volume of Dr. Bissell on the Apocrypha, edited by Dr. Schaff, in connection with the Commentary of Dr. Lange. The work of Dr. Bissell on the Apocrypha is by far the best in the English language.

copiously made use of in the Additions, and to introduce it may have been one reason for their fabrication. There is nothing objectionable about them. Luther compared them to "corn-flowers," which he was unwilling to destroy. They were, of course, pronounced canonical by the Council of Trent.

6. *The Book of Wisdom*. This book was of old known by the title of "The Wisdom of Solomon," and was supposed to have had the wise king for its author. But, as it clearly appears that the book was written in Greek, the idea of its Solomonic authorship must at once be set aside. Nor can any one be named with certainty, or even probability, as its author. It has been ascribed to Philo of Alexandria; but its contents are, in several respects, antagonistic to his teaching. The date of its composition may be fixed a little before the time of Christ. In style, the book is admirable and striking. To many writers this has seemed a conclusive proof that it could not have been written by a Jew of Palestine. But those who argue thus forget that they have to account for the canonical Epistle of St. James. The two writings may be placed side by side, so far as diction is concerned; and if the one was composed by a Palestinian Jew, so might the other.

Many interesting passages might be quoted from

the Book of Wisdom. To it we owe the beautiful expression, "a hope full of immortality" (ch. iii. 4), and that noble address to God, "Thou sparest all, because they are Thine, O Lord, Thou lover of souls" (ch. xi. 26). The following paragraph may be quoted in full, on account of the splendid imagery, as well as just thoughts, which it contains: "What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us? All these things have passed away like a shadow, and as a message that hurrieth by; as a ship that passeth through the billowy water, which, when it has gone through, not a trace thereof is to be found, nor the pathway of her keel amid the waves; or, as when a bird hath flown through the air, there is no token of her way discovered; but the light air, being beaten by the stroke of her wings, and parted with a strong whirring noise, is passed through on moving pinions, and after that no sign is found of her way therein; or, as when an arrow is shot at a mark, it parteth the air, and that immediately cometh together again, so that a man cannot know where it went through; even so we, as soon as we were born, began to draw to our end, and had no sign of virtue to show, but were wasted away in the midst of our wickedness. For the hope of the ungodly is like dust that is carried off by the wind, and like thin froth that is driven away by the storm, and as a smoke which

is dispersed by the wind, and which passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth only a day. But the righteous live for evermore: their reward also is in the Lord; and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive the kingdom of glory and the diadem of beauty from the Lord's hand; for with His right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them" (ch. v. 8—16).*

7. *Ecclesiasticus*. This is the Latin name for the book which is styled in Greek, "The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach." It is the great pearl of the Apocrypha. By far the longest, it is also by far the most valuable, of the books. In substance, it consists of a series of apothegms, and, according to Jerome, it really bore the name of "Proverbs." Many of the sayings which it contains are marked

* So little is the Apocrypha known in our country, at least in Scotland, that I remember hearing a reverend and learned professor in one of our universities extol for beauty and *originality* the following metaphor which occurs in Robert Hall's sermon on the death of the Princess Charlotte:—"The arrow passes through the air, which soon closes upon it, and all is tranquil." As appears from the passage quoted above, the image is at least as old as "The Book of Wisdom." I may add that it appears again, before the time of Hall, in the "Night Thoughts" of Young, in which we find these lines:—

"But their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,
Soon close: where passed the shaft, no trace is found."

by the greatest shrewdness and knowledge of the world. Thus, in chap. xi. 7, we find the pithy admonition (which has too often been forgotten), "Blame not before thou hast made full examination: understand first, and then rebuke." In chap. xiii. 9, 10, we read, "If thou be invited by a great man, show thyself backward, and so much the more will he invite thee. Press thou not upon him, lest thou be put back; stand not far off, lest thou be forgotten." In ver. 23 of the same chapter we find the following too true declaration: "When a rich man speaketh, every one is silent, and they extol his speech unto the clouds; but when a poor man speaketh, they say, Who is this? and if he stumble, they will help utterly to overthrow him." The following original and suggestive comparison occurs in chap. xxv. 20:—"As the climbing up by a sandy way is to the feet of an old man, so is a woman full of words to a quiet man." The last clause of chap. xxxviii. 25 will be recognised as very familiar, and is quoted by many who have no idea whence it is derived: "How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and *whose talk is of bullocks?*" The following is the eloquent tribute which the writer pays to Simon the Just, in chap. l. 5—10:—"How glorious was he in the midst of the people, as he came out from the inner sanc-

tuary! He was as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon when she is at the full, as the sun shining upon the temple of the Most High, and as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds, as the flower of roses in the spring of the year, as lilies by the fountains of waters, and as branches of the frankincense tree in the time of summer, as fire and incense in the censer, and as a vessel of beaten gold adorned with all manner of precious stones, as an olive tree putting forth fruit, and as a cypress tree which lifteth itself up unto the clouds." I only add one remarkable passage in which the writer represents God's mercy as extending to all the members of our race. He says (chap. xviii. 8—13), "What is man, and whereto serveth he? what is his good, and what is his evil? The number of a man's days are many, if they reach a hundred years. As a drop of water unto the sea, and as a grain in comparison with the sand, so are a few years to the days of eternity. Therefore is the Lord patient with them, and poureth forth His mercy upon them. He saw and perceived their end to be evil: therefore He multiplied His compassion. The mercy of man is toward his neighbour, but the mercy of the Lord is toward all flesh: He reproveth, and educateth, and teacheth, and bringeth again, as a shepherd does his flock."

As we learn from the prologue of this book, it

was at first written in Hebrew, that is, probably in Aramaic, the popular dialect of the Jews after the captivity. But no relic of the original remains. As a necessary consequence of the Hellenizing tendencies of the Jews, the book was speedily translated into Greek by the grandson of the author, and the version henceforth supplanted the original. The date of the book, as at first issued, was probably about B.C. 200, and the Greek translation of it was produced some half-century afterwards. As all agree, both author and translator were Jews of Palestine.

8. *The Book of Baruch*. This book, though pronounced canonical by the Council of Trent, has little that can be pleaded in its behalf, either on the ground of intrinsic merit or external authority. It was but lightly esteemed by the Jews of old, and is not recognized by the earliest Christian writers. The Church of Rome, however, has assigned it a place in the canon, along with most of the other Apocryphal books.

The author assumes to have been the well-known associate of Jeremiah (Jer. xxxii. 12, etc.). But this is easily disproved by the historical inaccuracies which the book contains. It was probably composed by one or more authors in the second or third century before Christ. The first part is thought to

have been originally written in Hebrew; the second was unquestionably composed in Greek. The whole book is destitute of independent thought, and is simply a feeble echo of the earlier canonical Hebrew Scriptures.

In imitation of the Vulgate, our common English version has inserted the so-called "Epistle of Jeremy" as the sixth chapter of the Book of Baruch. The prophet Jeremiah had certainly nothing to do with this production. It was clearly written in Greek, and probably about the period of the Maccabees.

9. *Additions to the Book of Daniel.* These Additions consist of (1) The Song of the Three Children, (2) The Story of Susanna, and (3) Of Bel and the Dragon. All the three pieces may be described as worse than worthless, and have certainly no claim to a place in the canon, although that rank has been given them by the Church of Rome. They seem to have been composed in Greek, in the first or second century before Christ.

10. *The Prayer of Manasseh.* This short composition is far superior to the legends just noticed, although, curiously enough, along with 1 and 2 Esdras (alone of the Apocryphal books) it was refused admission into the canon by the Council of

Trent. It expresses, with not a little force and feeling, the penitential emotions which are supposed to have sprung up in the bosom of Manasseh, while lying in captivity at Babylon. Many legends, doubtless, arose in connection with the striking history of Manasseh, as recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures; and this prayer, written in Greek, seems to have found its way into the Septuagint about the same time as the Additions to Daniel just noticed.

11. *The First Book of Maccabees.* There is reason for gratitude that this book has descended to our day. It contains a very simple, interesting, and substantially accurate narrative of the mad attempts of Antiochus Epiphanes, in particular, against the religion and liberties of the Jews, and of the heroic struggle by which, under the Maccabean princes, they secured their independence. The history comprised in the book extends from about B.C. 175 to B.C. 135; and for some part of that period we are dependent for information on it alone. It is thus an exceedingly valuable historical relic, and although exaggerations occur in it (as in iv. 14—24, etc.), and a poetical colouring is often given to the language (see ii. 5—13, etc.), yet the general credibility of the book is universally acknowledged. It is believed to have been originally written in Hebrew, but the original was speedily superseded by a Greek

translation, and in that form the book was made use of by the Jewish historian, Josephus.

12. *The Second Book of Maccabees.* History is also to be found in this book, but not in such a pure and uncorrupted state as in the former. To some extent, both books travel over the same ground, and where discrepancies exist between them, as is not unfrequently the case, there need be no question that the first is to be preferred. This second book, however, is, in splendour of diction and power of rhetoric, superior to the former. Passages of rich expressiveness occur (as in v. 20, viii. 18, etc.); and sometimes the narrative is very lively and rapid (as in xiii. 22—26). As almost all now admit, the book was originally written in Greek, and its date may be fixed about the middle of the first century before Christ.

Such, then, is a brief account of the Old Testament Apocrypha; and from what has been said, the reader will see that some of the books which it contains are extremely valuable. They link on, as nothing else can do, the Old Testament to the New, and fill up, to some extent, that deplorable hiatus which, but for them, exists between the period of the Return and the opening of the Gospel history. It is therefore much to be regretted that

an extreme and fanatical Protestantism has led, in many quarters, to an almost entire neglect of these books. They are certainly not worthy of being placed, as the Church of Rome has placed most of them, on a level with the books comprised in the Hebrew canon of Scripture ; but that is no reason why they should, as a whole, be spoken of with scorn, or treated with neglect. Many of the Fathers refer to them with the greatest respect. Luther, as we have seen, often drops a kindly word in their favour. He even goes so far as to declare respecting the First Book of Maccabees, that "it is not unworthy to be reckoned among the other sacred books," and Grimm, one of our greatest modern authorities on the subject of the Apocrypha, emphasises this opinion of the Reformer, by saying that "it deserves a place among the Hagiographa of the canon, not entirely perhaps with the same right as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, but decidedly with a better claim than the Book of Esther."*

The question whether the Apocryphal books are quoted or referred to in the New Testament has been much discussed, and with varying results. As to express quotations, there seem to be none, though many striking parallels can be produced. But as to references, these are clear and certain.

* Quoted by Dr. Davidson, *Introd. to Old Test.*, iii. 443.

No one can consider with a fair mind such a passage as Heb. xi. 35—38, without perceiving that it contains several obvious allusions to the narratives comprised in the first and second books of Maccabees.

In fine, a great boon would be conferred on ordinary English readers, if at least the Book of Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and the Books of Maccabees were printed in our common editions of the Bible. They might either be inserted in smaller type than the rest of the volume, between the Old and New Testaments, or given in like type, as an appendix at the end of the New Testament.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEXT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

IN dealing with the text of the Old Testament, scholars find themselves in a very different position from that which they occupy in seeking to settle the true text of the New Testament. They have less trouble with the Old Testament text, simply because they possess fewer materials for criticism. The number of manuscripts containing the whole or part of the Greek New Testament is enormous; and many of these can be proved to be quite independent of each other. Moreover, several of the manuscripts of the New Testament are of great antiquity; some, as the Vatican, the Sinaitic, and the Alexandrian, dating as far back as the fourth or fifth century of our era. But it is wholly different with the manuscripts of the Old Testament. Very few of these can be deemed older than the twelfth century, and, when carefully examined, they are all found to have sprung from the same source, being only somewhat varying forms of *one* original copy.

The Old Testament text, then, so far as we have any means at our command for establishing its correctness by means of manuscripts, is rather to be compared with some of the classical writers, than with the New Testament. For example, it is generally held that all existing copies of the Greek tragedian, Æschylus, are to be traced to a single original manuscript, the date of which cannot be carried higher than the tenth century. In that case, the variations which appear in other manuscripts of Æschylus can simply be regarded as inaccuracies which have been committed, or conjectural emendations which have been introduced, by transcribers. So with respect to the text of the Old Testament. All manuscripts, even the most ancient, so far as yet known, are to be traced to one archetypal text, which had become fixed among the Jews some time after the birth of Christ.

This seems a settled point in the judgment of modern Hebrew scholars. They are, in general, agreed "that all copies of the Hebrew text go back to one archetype;" * and, referring to this conclusion, as held by such men as Olshausen, Lagarde, and others, Dr. R. Smith, who is so familiar with the whole subject, after expressing himself to the above effect, does not hesitate to add, "I know of no

* *The Old Test. in Jew. Ch.*, p. 397.

attempt to refute the argument." We may thus say, respecting the present text of the Old Testament, what has been said in regard to the poem of Lucretius,—“It is now universally admitted that every existing copy has come from one original, which has itself long disappeared.”*

The important inquiry, therefore, at once presents itself,—“Whence was that fontal text derived?” The following answer has been recently given to this question. Referring to the ancient scribes, Dr. R. Smith remarks, “We have the text of the Hebrew Old Testament as they gave it to us.” And he goes on to say, “After the fall of the Jewish state, when the scribes ceased to be an active party in a living commonwealth, and became more and more pure scholars, gathering up and codifying all the fragments of national literature and national life that remained to them, we find the text of the Old Testament carefully conformed to a single archetype. But we cannot trace this text back through the centuries when the nation had still a life of its own. Nay, we can be sure that in these earlier centuries copies of the Bible circulated, and were freely read even by learned men like the author of the *Book of Jubilees*, which had great and notable variations of text, not inferior in extent to those still existing in

* Munro's *Lucretius*, ii 1.

the New Testament MSS. In later times every trace of these varying copies disappears. They must have been suppressed or gradually superseded by a deliberate effort, which has been happily compared by the German scholar, Nöldeke, to the action of the Caliph Othman in destroying all copies of the Koran which diverged from the standard text that he had adopted. There can be no question who were the instruments in this work. The scribes alone possessed the necessary influence to give one text or one standard MS. a position of such supreme authority. . . . This, then, was what the scribes did. They chose for us the Hebrew text which we have now got. Were they in a position to choose the very best text, to produce a critical edition which could justly be accepted as the standard, so that we lose nothing by the suppression of all divergent copies? Now, this at least we can say, that if they fixed for us a satisfactory text, the scribes did not do so in virtue of any great critical skill which they possessed in comparing MSS. and selecting the best readings." And, "if the scribes were not the men to make a critical text, it is plain that they were also not in a position to choose, upon scientific principles, the very best extant MS.; but it is very probable that they selected an old and well-written copy, possibly one of those MSS. which were preserved in the court of the Temple. Between this copy and

the original autographs of the sacred writers there must have been many a link.*

It must be confessed that this is a very plausible theory, but it is set forth with by far too much confidence. The truth is, that the real character of the existing Hebrew† text, as respects absolute trustworthiness, is as yet undecided, and must remain so, until certain great objects are accomplished. There must be a more scientific handling of all the materials of criticism. Manuscripts and versions of the Hebrew text must be more thoroughly investigated, while a far more exhaustive collection must be made of those quotations from the Old Testament, which are so profusely scattered through the later Jewish literature. Meanwhile, the following brief account may be given of the manner in which the Hebrew text, as it stands, has descended to our day.

We owe it to the labours of a company of Jewish

* *The Old Test.*, etc., p. 67 ff.

† The Hebrew text generally current at the present day is substantially that of Van der Hooght, published at Amsterdam and Utrecht in 1705. This text was based on that of Athias, a learned rabbi of Amsterdam, whose first edition came out in 1661, and was revised in 1667. But the original text, on which all subsequent issues have chiefly rested, was that of Bomberg, printed at Venice, 1525-26. The editor was a learned Tunisian Jew, named Jacob ben Chasin, and he happily adopted the Masoretic text, which, as we shall see, there is reason to believe, on the whole, very correct, though undoubtedly admitting of many emendations.

scholars, called "the Massorets," whose work, beginning about A.D. 600, extended over centuries, and was not concluded until about a thousand years after Christ. The term "Massorets" means "possessors of tradition," and the result of the long-continued efforts of those included under this appellation is known as "the Massora," a kindred term, denoting *what has been handed down* from former generations.

The work proposed to themselves by the Massorets was of a very varied and comprehensive character. It embraced such points as the settlement of the true text; the proper vocalization and accentuation of the words; the numbering of the verses of each of the books of Scripture; and, to a certain extent, the discussion of that interpretation of the sacred writings which should be accepted. The contents of the Massora have usually been described as dealing with the *letters, words, and verses* of the books of Scripture. And, with regard to each of these, the most minute observations are made. As respects the letters, the Massorets counted how often each letter of the Hebrew alphabet occurred in the Old Testament—noticed irregularities in the pointing which a few letters presented—and commented on anything unusual which was to be noted in the form or size of some of them. As regards the words, they

recorded on the margin readings which were to be preferred to those in the text—noticed any peculiarities of meaning or syntax—and stated how often particular words were to be found at the beginning, middle, or end of verses. And again, in regard to the verses, they pointed out the middle one in each of the books, named the letters with which verses began, and took notice of various other circumstances, often of a trivial or childish character, but all showing the microscopic attention which had been devoted to the sacred text.*

One of the most valuable services rendered by the Massorets was their collection of various readings. The number of these has been differently estimated at from about 800 to 1170. They were in no case admitted into the text by the Massorets themselves, but were either written on the margin, or preserved in separate documents. In existing manuscripts, however, these marginal notes are often found incorporated in the text. They, no doubt, arose partly from the various readings met with in the different manuscripts used by the Massorets, and partly from critical conjecture on the part of the compilers of the Massora. These marginal varia-

* So minute were their observations, that they noted the verses, such as Zech. vi. 11—amounting to twenty-six in the whole Bible—which contain in themselves all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

tions seem always to have represented the readings which the Massorets preferred, and are, in fact, generally superior to the traditional text. In our English version of the Old Testament, sometimes the "written" or received text is followed, while at other times the "reading" on the margin is adopted.

A curious phenomenon will be found here and there presenting itself to the eyes of one who looks carefully through a copy of the Hebrew Bible as printed at the present day. He will observe certain letters with marks over them, others printed in a larger size than common, and still others printed in a smaller form than the rest, with a few less frequent peculiarities. Thus in Gen. xvi. 5, xviii. 19, xxxvii. 12, etc., a circular mark appears over some of the words, which may be thus represented in English, "where;" and the Rabbinical writers explain these marks as indicating that a mystical sense is to be found in the passages; but what the signs were meant at first to indicate cannot now be determined. In other places, letters are either increased or diminished in size, so as to attract special attention; and this practice, too, is thought to point out hidden meanings which would not otherwise have been suspected. Thus, in Deut. vi. 4, the final letter of the Hebrew word for "hear," is enlarged, as if it were written in English "hear," and this is regarded as calling particular attention to the importance of

the statement about to be made. On the other hand, letters are sometimes found written in a smaller form than those around them, as in Esther ix. 7, where the name of one of Haman's sons is written as if thus in English, "Parshandatha," and this diminution of the Hebrew letter standing for *th* is thought to suggest the disdain of the Jews for Haman and his children. The peculiarities of writing referred to probably had their origin in mere accident; but their careful preservation by one copyist after another shows the extreme watchfulness which was brought to bear on the work of transcription; and it is a curious fact that such variations in the size of letters, due at first to merely accidental causes, should have a place in our printed copies of the Hebrew Bible even at the present day.

The important subject of vocalization was formerly glanced at, but here falls to be more particularly considered. It was shown that only the consonants were, for a very long period, written in Hebrew documents, and that most diverse meanings might be attached to these, according as one set of vowels or another accompanied them. Strange to say, some recent writers have pleaded that the vagueness of meaning thus imparted to the text was an advantage, and that therefore the Hebrew text should be interpreted in any way the consonants by themselves

would permit ! But this is obviously absurd. The sacred text could have had at first but one definite meaning, and this must have been fixed by the particular vowels which in every case waited upon the consonants. To give another illustration : as in English, the three consonants, W R D, may mean either "ward" or "word," according to the vowel which is placed between the first and second letters, while, if vowels are inserted also between the second and third letters, we may have such different senses suggested as "warred" "wearied" "worried;" so is it very frequently in Hebrew. In fact, there are some cases in which we know that the Jewish authorities differed as to the proper vowels, and therefore as to the meaning of the words. Thus, the word rendered "bells" in Zech. xiv. 20, may with a different pointing be translated "shadows," and it is actually so taken by some of the Rabbinical writers. Again, the word rendered "bed" in Gen. xlvii. 31, may, with different vowels, be translated "staff," and is so taken by the Septuagint. This accounts for the difference between Gen. xlvii. 31, as given in our Authorised Version, and Heb. xi. 21, which refers to the passage. In the latter the Septuagint is followed. From such illustrations it becomes plain how important the question is as to the degree of authority which is to be attached to the traditional system of vocalization.

Very various opinions have been expressed as to the origin and authorship of the Hebrew vowel points. Some have maintained that they were invented or restored by Ezra, and then handed down by tradition, until at last they were perfected and written down by the Massorets. Others have held that the Massorets themselves invented them; while such an eminent Hebrew and Rabbinical scholar as Dr. Lightfoot goes so far as to claim for them divine inspiration. These and other discrepant theories sufficiently prove that no certain conclusion can be reached on the point in question. We can only be guided by probability in deciding it. If I may venture to express an opinion regarding it, I should be inclined to hold that provision had been made from the time when the Hebrew began to fade out of use as a living tongue, for the accurate transmission of its vowel points. We have seen what a vital matter this is in the interpretation of the language. The most diverse significations attach themselves to words, according to the vowels by which their consonants are attended. And we cannot conceive that such a momentous matter as the correct exegesis of Scripture would be left to hazard, or would not, in fact, be cared for in the most scrupulous and effective manner. Probably, therefore, about the date of the return from the captivity, means were devised for fixing and trans-

miting the proper Hebrew vocalization. There is, however, no proof that the vowels were *written* in the text, along with the consonants, for many centuries afterwards. It is doubtful whether they are referred to in the Talmud or not, some scholars taking an affirmative, and others a negative, view of this question. What alone seems certain is, that they were no *invention* of the Massorets, but had existed long before their day, and that the system was simply elaborated and written down by them in the course of the many centuries embraced by their labours.

Something must now be said with respect to the Hebrew *accents*. These fulfil far more important and manifold purposes than is the case in most other languages. First, and as in other tongues, they indicate the tone-syllable. This is a far more weighty matter than we sometimes clearly apprehend. From being accustomed to read Greek and Latin according to quantity, and not accent, we are apt to forget how important the latter is, in order to the bringing out of the true meaning of a word. Every one, however, who has been in Greece, where the ancient language is so wonderfully preserved in substance, soon discovers how necessary attention to the correct accentuation is, in order that he may either understand, or be understood. And we have only to think what different ideas are suggested in our own lan-

guage by the words *présent* and *présent*, *désert* and *desért*, that we may feel how much frequently depends on attending to the proper accentuation of a word.*

Again, the Hebrew accents are also used as a means of punctuation. This, too, is a most important object. As every one who reflects for a moment will perceive, the place and manner in which stops are employed often amount to interpretation. A striking illustration of this is found in the New Testament in Rom. ix. 5. As that verse stands in the Authorised Version, it runs thus: "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." But readers of the Revised Version find the following note upon the margin: "Some modern interpreters place a full stop after *flesh*, and translate, *He who is God over all be (is) blessed for ever*; or, *He*

* Every Scotchman has smiled at times to hear from the lips of Englishmen such an accentuation as *Bálmoral* for *Balmóral*, *Móntrose* for *Montróse*, *Obán* for *O'ban*; and the following amusing illustration may be added of the strange way in which a misplaced accent disguises a word. The story goes that an accomplished Frenchman, who had acquired his knowledge of English only from books, cherished a great admiration for the pastoral poet Shenstone, and that, on the death of his favourite, he wrote the following epitaph in his honour:—

"Beneath this plain stone
Lies William Shenstone,
Who wrote on things rural,
In language *natúral*!"

who is over all is God, blessed for ever. Others punctuate, *flesh, who is over all. God be (is) blessed for ever.** There is nothing corresponding to stops in the ancient Greek manuscripts, so that the true rendering of such a passage as the above must be reached on other grounds. But the Hebrew text has, in this respect, the advantage. It is furnished with a rich system of accents, which serve, among other purposes, to show the relation in which each word stands to the whole sentence. By attending to the interpunction thus secured, various errors of translation may be avoided. Thus, some Jewish expositors have striven hard to get rid of the Messianic reference in Isaiah ix. 5, which is rendered as follows in our Authorised Version: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the

* Many illustrations of the importance of a proper punctuation in order to bring out the real meaning or force of a passage might be adduced. The following additional one may be given from the *Samson* of Milton. Near the beginning of the poem we find these lines generally pointed as follows:—

" Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke."

But how much more strikingly is the climax of Samson's miseries brought out when the second line is differently punctuated, and the passage read thus:—

" Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless, in Gaza, at the mill, with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke."

government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." They have tried to substitute some such rendering as the following: "The God who is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, calls his name the Prince of peace;" but the accentuation is against this, and in favour of the common English version;* while Aben Ezra, a celebrated Jewish Rabbi, himself declares, "Any interpretation which is not in accordance with the arrangement of the accents thou shalt not consent to, nor shalt thou listen to it."

Yet again, the Hebrew accents were intended to serve a musical purpose. They regulate that peculiar cantillation made use of by the Jews in the recitation of the Scriptures in the synagogues. Some have maintained that their import from the first was essentially rhythmical. As to their antiquity, the same remarks will apply that have been made above with respect to the Hebrew vowel points. It is certain, from the way in which the accents are referred to in the Massora, that they were of earlier date than that compilation. Scholars are divided in opinion as to whether or not they are referred to in the Talmud.

* *British Quarterly Review*, April, 1881, p. 338.

A few more particular remarks may now be made on the subject of existing Hebrew manuscripts. From time to time rumours are circulated that some very ancient copies have been discovered. But nothing practical has resulted from these reported discoveries. So far as is yet known, the most ancient Hebrew manuscripts cannot be dated much higher than the tenth century. And, even at the present day, the principles on which the age of such documents ought to be settled have not been agreed upon by scholars. The science of Old Testament textual criticism is still in a comparatively imperfect condition, so that little can with certainty be said as to the value or antiquity of extant manuscripts. The following brief account of the matter by an English and a German writer must here suffice :—

“ In computing the number of known MSS.,” says Mr. Thrupp, “ it must be borne in mind that by far the greater part contain only portions of the Bible. Of the 581 Jewish MSS. collated by Kennicott, not more than 102 give the Old Testament complete. with those of De Rossi the case is similar. In Kennicott’s volumes, the MSS. used for each book are distinctly enumerated at the end of the book. The number collated by Kennicott and De Rossi together were, for the Book of Genesis, 490 ; for the Megilloth (including the books of Ruth, Esther, Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and Lamentations) collectively,

549; for the Psalms, 495; for Ezra and Nehemiah, 172; and for the Chronicles, 211. Manuscript authority is most plenteous for the Book of Esther, least so for those of Ezra and Nehemiah. Since the days of Kennicott and De Rossi, modern research has discovered various MSS. beyond the limits of Europe. Of many of these there seems no reason to suppose that they will add much to our knowledge of the Hebrew text. Those found in China are not essentially different in character from the MSS. previously known in Europe: that brought by Buchanan from Malabar is now supposed to be a European roll."* Strack, a recent German writer, has enumerated and described the most ancient and valuable Hebrew manuscripts which are known to exist. He refers to the following: (i.) That of Ben Asher, who lived at Tiberias in the tenth century. This MS. is described as the most celebrated and valuable of all, and has had a very dominant influence in the formation of the received text. (ii.) A MS. of the Prophets, said to have been written in the year 827. (iii.) A MS. of the later prophets, undoubtedly ancient, now in the British Museum. (iv.) Two ancient MSS., said to be at Damascus, but which have not yet been accurately collated. (v.) The MSS. of Kennicott, already described. (vi.) The MSS. of

* Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, art. Old Test., p. 604.

De Rossi, four of which are supposed to date from the eighth to the eleventh century. (vii.) The MSS. preserved at Odessa, one of which, written on deerskin, and containing the law complete, is said to have been written before 580 A.D. But these Odessan MSS. still await full examination. (viii.) The great collection of MSS. made by Firkowitz, nearly half a century ago, and now in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg. Some of these are said to be very ancient, but as yet very little is known with certainty regarding them.*

It thus appears that there is no inconsiderable amount of available manuscript wealth, which still remains to be turned to full account. Those copies which have had a *Karaite* origin should especially be examined with great care. The Karaites are a sect of Jews who attach supreme importance to the written law, and reject mere oral traditions. There is reason, therefore, to expect that their manuscripts of the sacred books may exhibit a text differing, to some extent, from that of the Massorets. It is not likely, however, that much change will require to be made on the Hebrew text as now received, even after all the manuscript materials for criticism which exist have been subjected to the most sifting examination.

* *Proleg. Crit. in Vet. Test. Hebraic.*, p. 43.

One further remark may be made respecting the text of the Old Testament. It used to be maintained that the Jews had, in several places, wilfully corrupted it, in order to weaken the argument derived from it in favour of Christianity. This charge is as old as the days of Justin Martyr, who lived in the early part of the second century. That primitive Father of the Church alleges in his "Dialogue with Trypho," that the Jews had cut out from Ps. xcvi. 10, the words, "from the wood." He would have the verse to run thus: "Say among the heathen, The Lord reigneth *from the wood*;" and he affirms that these last three words had been excised by the Jews because of their clear reference to the cross of Christ.* But there is not the slightest ground for such an allegation. As Otto has remarked, it is far more likely that the words were inserted by some Christian, than that they were cut out by the Jews. And the many charges of a similar kind made by the early Fathers seem all equally baseless.†

* *Dial. cum Tryph. Jud.*, chap. lxxiii.

† The most remarkable passage, after that referred to above, is the following, which was said to have been cut out from the text of Jeremiah:—"And the holy Lord remembered His dead Israel, who had fallen asleep in the land of sepulture, and descended to them to preach the salvation which is from Him, that He might save them." Justin Martyr expressly accuses the Jews of having excised this passage, and Irenæus frequently quotes it. But, as Harvey has remarked, "the fact that

Scholars are now generally agreed that there is no reason to believe that the Jews at any time mutilated the sacred text. De Wette* observes with much force, that, had they allowed themselves to do so, this must have appeared in their bitter controversies with the Samaritans. But, on the contrary, it was their opponents who altered the words of Scripture, in order to obtain some seeming support for the peculiar views which they had adopted. In the fidelity with which the Jews thus acted, we find a strong confirmation of the belief that they have handed down to us a generally sound and genuine text, so far as that was in their own possession. But, as we shall see in the following chapters, ancient versions still remain to be more carefully and critically studied, with a view to the more definite ascertainment of the primitive Hebrew text.

not only ignored in the Hebrew text, but also in the LXX., the Vulgate, the Hexapla, the Targums, and all other ancient versions of Scripture, is a conclusive proof of its spuriousness"—*Irenæus*, ii. 109.

* *Eni. in das Alt. Test.*, s. 84.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH.

I BRING the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch together in the same chapter for two reasons,—first, because they were both formed *before* the coming of Christ, and secondly, because, as we shall see, they have a very close connection with each other.*

Hardly any event in the history of the world can be deemed more providential than the formation of the Greek version of the Old Testament. The Hebrew language was always confined within a very narrow territory; and so long as Divine revelation continued locked up in that tongue, it could become known only to comparatively few of the members of our race. But, under the wise government of the Almighty, provision had been made, long before

* The Samaritan Pentateuch is a *recension* rather than a version, since its language is substantially the same as the Hebrew.

the coming of Christ, for the easy and rapid spread of the Gospel message throughout the whole civilized world, as soon as the fulness of time arrived. The Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures had been gradually formed at Alexandria, between the third and first century before Christ, and was everywhere current among the Jews at the date of our Saviour's birth. The Old Testament Scriptures were thus thrown open to the whole world; and as the New Testament was throughout written in Greek, the whole of the sacred volume, so far as its contents were collected and circulated, thus became intelligible to almost every one within the vast bounds of the Roman Empire. It is well worth our while to pause here for a little, and consider how widely a knowledge of the Greek language had been spread throughout the world before the commencement of the apostolic age. We shall thus see how wonderfully the way had been prepared for the promulgation of divine truth among all nations, when the stream of spiritual blessings hitherto confined, for the most part, to the land of Israel was now to burst its barriers, and carry its life-giving waters even to the ends of the earth.

The great primary cause of the diffusion of the Greek language was the conquest of the East by Alexander the Great. Setting out from his native

Macedon in the year 334 before Christ, the youthful conqueror, in the course of the next ten years, made himself undisputed master of the whole of Asia. But the glory which he acquired was far greater than that of a mere victor. Everywhere his advance was the herald of civilization and culture. Far from being satisfied with simply destroying, his constant policy was to improve and enlighten the countries which he subdued. For this purpose, cities were built, and colonies planted, as he went forward in his victorious career; and these, of course, became centres from which the influence of Greek civilization spread with ever-advancing power. At his death, the immense empire owning his sway was broken up into a number of Greek kingdoms which endured for centuries; and, under their fostering care, the Hellenism, which he had done so much to diffuse, continued more and more to acquire ascendancy throughout the earth.

Accordingly, when we glance at the condition of the civilized world for some generations before Christ, we see that it had become almost completely Hellenized. We look at Italy, and find that, as respects art and literature, "captive Greece had captured her fierce conqueror." We look at Egypt, and we find that, under the beneficent rule of the Ptolemies, Hellenic culture was promoted in every possible way, and carried to the highest pitch of

refinement. We look at Judæa even, and we find that, more than a century before Christ, the influence of Greece had become predominant; so that, as the author of the Second Book of Maccabees expresses it (chap. iv. 13), "a kind of acme of Hellenism" then prevailed in the country.

Alexandria in Egypt was especially regarded as the metropolis of Greek learning. Vast numbers of Jews had settled in that city. They formed, indeed, one of the three bodies constituting the original colonists, the other two elements consisting of Greeks and Egyptians. The Jews had a district and a governor of their own; and as Philo, himself an Alexandrian Jew, informs us, were in possession of special rights and immunities. Now, among these thoroughly Hellenized Jews, few of whom understood a word of Hebrew, there would speedily spring up a natural desire to possess their sacred books in the language with which alone they were familiar. This feeling sufficiently accounts for the undoubted fact that, towards the close of the third century before Christ; the Hebrew Scriptures began to be translated into Greek at Alexandria, and that the work was gradually carried forward, until what is known as the Septuagint version was at last completed.

But a much more romantic account than this has descended to us from antiquity, with respect to the

origin of the Septuagint translation. In a letter purporting to have been written by Aristeeas or Aristeeus, to his brother Philocrates, we are told that the work was due to the desire of Ptolemy Philadelphus to have a copy in Greek of the sacred writings of the Jews, for the further enrichment of that famous library which, in B.C. 273, had been established at Alexandria. With this view, he sent the writer Aristeeas, who held a high position at his court, and Andreas, captain of his guards, to Jerusalem, to beg the assistance of the high priest in carrying his wish into fulfilment. They presented rich presents to the Temple, and easily obtained from Eleazar an authorised copy of the law, which, says the account, was written in letters of gold, along with six interpreters from each of the twelve tribes. On reaching Alexandria, the interpreters were invited to a banquet which lasted seven days, and then had lodgings assigned them in the island of Pharos, where, after mutual comparison, they finished their work in the space of seventy-two days. Later accounts affirm that the translators did not confer with each other at all, but carried on their work separately, or, as some say, in pairs, and then met on an appointed day, in the presence of the king, to exhibit the versions which they had produced. It is added that, when these were compared, they were found in every point

exactly to agree; and the work was therefore, of necessity, believed to have been the result of divine inspiration.

No word need be said to prove that this narrative is, to some extent at least, fabulous. The professed letter of Aristeeas is now generally believed to be a fabrication, though it was accepted as genuine by Josephus and by the Fathers of the Church. But it is difficult to conclude that the account has not some foundation in fact. Not improbably, Ptolemy, who was a most enlightened and liberal prince, hearing of the desire of his Jewish subjects to possess a version of their sacred books in the Greek language, encouraged the design, and took some steps to aid in its accomplishment. The statement that seventy-two learned Jews were, at his request, sent from Jerusalem to Alexandria, to carry out the work, has nothing incredible about it; and the name which the version has always borne is thus naturally accounted for, it having been styled, in round numbers, from the earliest times, the Septuagint—the Seventy.

But whatever may be thought of this, the *undoubted* facts are, that the Greek version was formed at Alexandria—that it was begun under the Ptolemies about 280 B.C., that the Pentateuch was first translated, circulating for a time by itself—and that the translation of the remaining books was gradually

carried forward, until the work stood complete several generations before Christ.

And now the important inquiry arises—In what esteem was the Septuagint version held by the Jews of the Apostolic age, and by the early Fathers of the Christian Church? Those who have really investigated this subject have happily now no difficulty in replying to these questions. The ridiculous notions once prevalent, as to the hatred which the Jews entertained towards the Greek version, are now thoroughly exploded. No doubt they received some sanction from certain passages in the Talmud, but these were the utterances of an age too late to have any weight in deciding the matter, and of persons who spoke and wrote under the influence of hopeless prejudice. It is lamentable, however, to find how such misrepresentations were, until recently, repeated by some of the ablest writers in our country. The late Dean Stanley, for example, gave his countenance to the fable that “the Jews of Palestine . . . held that on the day on which the seventy translators met a supernatural darkness overspread the earth; and the day was to them one of their solemn periods of fasting and humiliation.”* As is well known to all

* *Lectures on the Jewish Church*, i., p. xxxv. Although the worthy Dean was thus betrayed into the acceptance of a pre-

that have looked carefully into the subject, these notions are utterly baseless. They rest on some Talmudical statements, which are in thorough contradiction to other, and far more trustworthy, announcements contained in the Talmud itself. As might be expected from the nature of that vast collection of Jewish thought, feeling, and speculation, the most inconsistent views on various subjects are often found presented in its pages.* But all competent inquirers are now agreed as to the judgment which its most ancient statements of opinion lead us to form with respect to the esteem in which the Septuagint version was held by the Jews of the apostolic age. This will be made plain from the following quotations.

The opinion of Rabbi Symeon, who was a contemporary of Josephus, is quoted in the Talmud to the following effect, "that it was lawful to write

vailing delusion, never was there a writer more willing to acknowledge his mistakes and to correct them. I cannot help stating, in illustration, that in one of the last letters I received from him, referring to the statement which he had made in his *Sermons in the East*, that in the synagogue at Nazareth "the roll of the *Hebrew* Scriptures was delivered to Christ," he frankly said that such words were written "in the days of his ignorance," and that they should be corrected in any subsequent edition. Thus willing was he to abandon opinions which he had come to see were not in accordance with truth. *Utinam sic omnes!*

* See chap. xi. for an account of the Talmud.

down the sacred Scriptures, and to read them in public, *only in the Greek language*, and not in foreign tongues." This is the kind of feeling expressed by all the early Rabbinical writers. Accordingly, Frankel, a modern Jewish scholar, who has devoted great attention to the subject, declares that the Septuagint is habitually referred to in the Talmud in terms of the highest respect.* "Early Rabbinical tradition," says Dr. R. Smith, "expressly recognises the Greek version as legitimate."† Stronger language might warrantably be used, for in some passages of the Talmud it is even implied that the Septuagint was divinely inspired. Such passages reflect the feelings of the Jews at the beginning of our era: why different sentiments were at a later period expressed with regard to the Greek version will afterwards be noticed.

As to the opinion of the Alexandrian translation entertained by Christ and His Apostles, the best evidence is furnished by the use which is made of it in the New Testament. We find that it was the Bible which they constantly employed;‡ and they

* *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta*, p. 61.

† *The Old Test. in Jewish Church*, p. 101.

‡ This point is, in several respects, so interesting and important, that I have devoted the whole of the following chapter to its consideration. It has, of course, a weighty bearing on the question as to the authority to be ascribed to the Septuagint in determining the genuine Hebrew text.

thus, in the most emphatic and practical way, attached to it the stamp of their approbation. The same continued to be the case in the early Christian Church. All the primitive Fathers, such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, rested exclusively upon the Greek version for their knowledge and use of the Old Testament Scriptures. And they had the very highest estimate of its authority and value. This comes out again and again in the writings of Irenæus. Thus he says in one passage, that “even the Gentiles present,” when the Septuagint translation was presented to King Ptolemy, “perceived that the Scriptures had been interpreted by the inspiration of God;” and he goes on to claim for the renderings of the version an authority as decisive as that of the Apostles themselves.* This continued for many ages to be the judgment of the Christian Church. It is very strongly expressed, for instance, in the following passage from one of the best known of the works of St. Augustine:—“If any other translator of the Scriptures from the Hebrew into another tongue is faithful, in that case he agrees with these seventy translators; and if he is not found to agree with them, then we ought to believe that the prophetic gift is possessed by them. For the same Spirit who was

* *Against Heresies*, iii. 21, 2, 3.

in the prophets when they spake those things was also in the seventy men when they translated them, so that unquestionably they had power also to say something else [of their own], just as if the prophet himself had said both, because it would be the same Spirit who said both; and they could say the same thing differently, so that, although the words were not the same, yet the same meaning would shine forth to those of sound understanding; and they could omit or add something, so that even by this it might be shown that there was in that work not a human bondage, which the translator had to yield to the words, but rather a divine power, which filled and ruled the mind of the translator."* The Greek version is thus placed on the very same platform of authority with the Hebrew original; and, although we may not be disposed to acknowledge its claims to such a position, we cannot but feel that a work which was held in such esteem and reverence by the early Church may justly demand and receive the utmost respect at the present day.

In modern times, however, the Septuagint has lain comparatively neglected. Sad to say, no satisfactory edition of it yet exists. Its text still awaits

* *The City of God*, xviii. 44. As is well known, Augustine regarded the Septuagint as too sacred a work to have even its errors corrected, and, on this ground, strongly objected, for a time, to the amendments on it proposed by Jerome.

critical examination and adjustment; and little use, consequently, has as yet been made of it for the correction of passages manifestly corrupt in the Hebrew. But scholars are now awakening to the pre-eminent value which would, in this respect, belong to a trustworthy edition of the Septuagint. When we reflect that it represents a text of the Old Testament which circulated among the Jews before the days of Christ, and remember that, as shown in the preceding chapter, our present Hebrew text must be traced back to a single original copy, we cannot fail to be impressed with the unspeakable value which would belong to a critically revised text of the Septuagint translation.

If, however, we look at the version as it at present exists, we perceive in it many obvious errors. Sometimes Hebrew consonants which resemble each other in shape or sound have been mistaken, the one for the other; while, again, an improper vowel pointing has not unfrequently been adopted. At the same time, when discrepancies appear between the Hebrew and Greek texts, the error is by no means always on the side of the translation. Many passages occur, in which even the existing text of the Septuagint, confused and unsettled as it so largely is, must be preferred to the Hebrew, as we now have it. Examples are to be found in Gen. iv. 8, where, instead of the words, "And Cain talked with Abel

his brother," we should read, "And Cain said to Abel his brother, Let us go forth into the field;" in Exod. ii. 25, where; for "and had respect unto them," we should read, "and was made known unto them;" in Prov. v. 16, where a negative ought to be inserted, and we should read, "Let not thy waters overflow from thy fountain;" and in Nahum iii. 8, where the Greek and Hebrew are, in the first half of the verse, totally different. It is greatly to be regretted that a revised and improved text of the Septuagint should not have been prepared before the formation of a revised version of the Old Testament in our language.*

We now proceed to a brief consideration of the Samaritan Pentateuch.

The Jews and the Samaritans, in their relations to each other, furnish the very types of religious bigotry and hatred. They illustrate the saying which has been too often verified, that, the nearer two religious

* Additional references to passages in which the Greek text is to be preferred to the Hebrew will be found in *The Old Test. in Jewish Church*, pp. 91—99. As to the Septuagint version generally, Dr. R. Smith well remarks, "The translation is not of equal merit throughout, and it is plain that different parts of the Bible were rendered into Greek by men of varying capacity; but, in general . . . it is safe to say that the translators were men of competent scholarship, as scholarship then went, and that they did their work faithfully, and in no arbitrary way" (p. 92).

parties approach each other, the bitterer is the mutual animosity which they cherish. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John iv. 9); "They went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him; and they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 52, 53). "Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" (John viii. 48.) Such are some passages which indicate the deep-rooted enmity and prejudice existing between co-religionists, like the Jews and Samaritans, and which restrained them, as much as possible, from holding fellowship with one another.

This rancorous spirit was unhappily fostered, from generation to generation, by a difference which existed in their religious books. The Samaritans accepted as sacred only the Pentateuch, maintaining, as one of their leading principles, that "there is no prophet but Moses," and branding the other scriptural writers with the most opprobrious epithets. Thus Samuel is declared to have been "a magician and an infidel," and Ezra is described as being "cursed for ever." The law, however, as accepted by the Samaritans, was, in all essential particulars, identical with that of the Jews. A few variations occur, of which the following, as most important, may be noticed:—

In Deut. xxvii. 4, *Gerizim* is substituted for *Ebal*,

and reads thus, "It shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones which I command you this day on Mount Gerizim." This change appears obviously to have been made in the interest of Samaritan notions as to the holiness of Mount Gerizim, on which their temple was built. Some Biblical scholars, however, among whom was not only the eccentric Whiston, but the great Hebrew palæographer Kennicott, have held that Gerizim is the correct reading, and that Ebal is a corruption introduced by the Jews. But "this supposition," says Deutsch, "is completely given up by modern Biblical scholars, although," he adds, "it cannot be denied that there is some *primâ facie* ground for a doubt upon the subject."* A very remarkable emendation of the Hebrew text occurs in Exod. xii. 40. The following words, printed in italics, form an important supplement to the passage as it stands in our common version:—"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, *and of their fathers, which they sojourned in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt*, was four hundred and thirty years." The Septuagint has the same reading, and there appear to be good reasons for its acceptance. In fact, the statement made in our English version, based upon the Hebrew, is incorrect. The actual

* Deutsch, *Lit. Rem.*, p. 417.

stay of the children of Israel in Egypt did not amount to more than two hundred and fifteen years. St. Paul, following, as usual, the Septuagint, gives the right chronology in Gal. iii. 17; and there seems no difficulty in understanding why, in a mere rhetorical passage, the period should be referred to in round numbers in Acts vii. 6, as having embraced four hundred years. Other variations from the Hebrew text are found in the dates of events in the lives of the patriarchs, and in other minute points of comparatively little consequence.

Though the language of the Samaritan Pentateuch is substantially the same as the Hebrew, the form of the letters used in it is totally different. It is written in the old Samaritan characters, the same, or nearly the same with those which appear on the so-called Maccabean shekels which have survived till our day. This was probably the character in general use among the Jews before their adoption of the square Hebrew letters, so familiar to us in modern printed editions of the Old Testament.

Notwithstanding that several references to the Samaritan Pentateuch are found in the writings of the Fathers, it was not till the beginning of the seventeenth century that copies of it were brought to Europe. About sixteen nearly complete manuscripts are now accessible, along with a number of fragments, more or less important.

When first the Samaritan Pentateuch became known to European scholars, a very fierce controversy arose as to its value, and raged for almost two hundred years. Some maintained that it was far superior to the Massoretic text adopted in our ordinary versions. They would have had the Samaritan followed throughout, although it should surely have been manifest that it had altered readings under the influence of a dogmatic bias, as, *e.g.*, in constantly substituting God "*has* chosen," for "*will* choose," a place for His worship, to indicate that Mount Gerizim, on which the temple of the Samaritans stood, was *the* spot which had been pointed out to Moses as the place selected for the worship of Jehovah. It was not until 1815 that the relative merit of the Hebrew and Samaritan text was conclusively settled. In that year the celebrated Hebraist, Gesenius, published a work upon the subject, which scattered to the winds those claims which had been so persistently urged in favour of the Samaritan recension, and placed on a secure basis the general superiority of the Massoretic text.

To this day, hardly anything absolutely certain is known as to the age or origin of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Many points remain to be more fully investigated, before satisfaction can be reached on these questions. Known manuscripts must be examined and compared with greater care. The

history of the Samaritan people must be inquired into with deeper research. Search must be made for more ancient copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch, than those which are as yet possessed. None of the manuscripts at present in Europe can claim a higher date than the tenth century after Christ, but others, of far greater antiquity, are probably still in existence. The Samaritans claim an absurdly high age for the scroll still in use at Nablous, but that copy probably *is* possessed of a very considerable antiquity. It is astonishing how tenaciously the people of Samaria have always kept themselves distinct from the Jews, and maintained their peculiar religious observances, even down to our day. They are now reduced to about two hundred persons, but still cling to the ancient home of their race at Shechem, afterwards, with a slight change of site, called Neapolis, which name survives in the form Nablous, by which the place is known at the present day. The Samaritans of our Lord's day have been described as "a people distinct from the Jews, though lying in the very midst of the Jews; a people preserving their identity, though seven centuries had rolled away since they had been brought from Assyria by Esarhaddon, and though they had abandoned their polytheism for a sort of ultra-Mosaicism; a people who, though their limits had been gradually contracted, and the rallying-place of their religion

on Mount Gerizim had been destroyed one hundred and sixty years before, by John Hyrcanus (B.C. 130), and though Samaria, the city, had been again and again destroyed, and though their territory had been the battle-field of Syria and Egypt—still preserved their nationality, still worshipped from Shechem and their other impoverished settlements towards their sacred hill, still retained their nationality, and could not coalesce with the Jews.”* This once flourishing people, springing from the Cuthite settlers and the remnants of the ten tribes left in the land, with a Bible and a religion so peculiar, have now dwindled, as has been said, into a very small community, but even now preserve their ancient peculiarities. As a modern writer has remarked, “Through all vicissitudes, Gerizim, the oldest sanctuary in Palestine, retained its sanctity to the end. Probably in no other locality has the same worship been sustained with so little change or interruption for so great a series of years as in this mountain, from the time of Abraham to the present day. In their humble synagogue, at the foot of the mountain, the Samaritans still worship,—the oldest and the smallest sect in the world : distinguished by their noble physiognomy and stately appearance from all other branches of the race of Israel. In their prostrations at the ele-

* Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, art. Samaria.

vation of their revered copy of the Pentateuch, they throw themselves on their faces in the direction, not of priest or law, or any object within the building, but obliquely towards the eastern summit of Mount Gerizim. And up the side of the mountain, and on its long ridge, is to be traced the pathway by which they ascend to the sacred spots where they alone of all the Jewish race yearly celebrate the paschal sacrifice." *

As has been already suggested, it is impossible to fix with certainty the date at which the Samaritan Pentateuch was formed from the Hebrew. But a conjecture may be hazarded, as perhaps more probable than any other. Chiefly at a time when the Jews and Samaritans were at variance on other grounds might a difference on religious points be expected to arise between them. Now we know that a very hostile spirit was evinced by the one community towards the other, when the Jews returned from the Babylonish captivity, and set about rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem. We read in Ezra iv. 2—6, that the Samaritans requested permission to join in that pious labour, declaring that they served the same God as the Jews, and had done so since the days of Esarhaddon. But they were resolutely excluded from the work by Zerubbabel and the rest

* Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 240.

of the fathers of Israel. The consequence was, that they contracted a spirit of bitter enmity against the Jews, and sought in every possible way to hinder the success of their labours. This, then, was exactly the time at which a religious schism might be expected to take place. Debarred from all interest in the Temple at Jerusalem, the Samaritans built a temple of their own on Mount Gerizim. And, out of jealousy of the Jews, they refused to acknowledge any of those books which were about this time added to the Hebrew canon; while, from some motive or another, they also rejected all the books which had found a place in it after the books of Moses. We may thus conclude that, about 450 B.C., the Samaritan Pentateuch assumed its special form, preserving, in substance, the Mosaic legislation, but being, in some passages, altered, so as to yield a seeming support to the claims of the Samaritans.

As to the undoubted similarity which is frequently found to exist between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint, it is very difficult to suggest a satisfactory explanation. The problem is a highly complicated one. For, while it is true that, in perhaps not fewer than two thousand passages, the Septuagint and Samaritan Pentateuch agree in readings different from those of the common Hebrew text, it is no less true that the Septuagint, more

frequently still, agrees with the Hebrew against the Samaritan, and, even where it does deviate from the Massoretic text, refuses to follow that of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The problem thus suggested still awaits solution, and there is no likelihood of its being mastered until critical editions of both the rival texts have been produced. Then it may be seen how far the Septuagint was based upon the Samaritan Pentateuch, or *vice versa*; and to what extent either or both may be safely applied for the rectification and improvement of the present Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SEPTUAGINT—ITS CONSTANT USE BY CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

EVERYWHERE in the Gospels and Epistles we meet with references to the *Scriptures* of the Old Testament. The word occurs about fifty times in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles. It is used with reference to both high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, among the Jews. "Did ye never read in the Scriptures?" was a question which could be asked with the utmost point by Christ, in speaking to His countrymen, whether priests or people. He could say, "Search (or "Ye search") the Scriptures (John v. 39) in more immediately addressing the leaders of thought in Judea; and His humble disciples were in circumstances to have it said regarding themselves (Luke xxiv. 27), that "He expounded unto them in *all the Scriptures* the things concerning Himself." Christ could, in His addresses to the common people, familiarly cite texts from the Scriptures (Mark xii. 36), with perfect assurance that His

hearers possessed the means of verifying His word ; and the Jews, again, could readily quote from the same sacred source (John vi. 31) in the presence of His disciples (ver. 60), all classes having manifestly an easy access to, and an intimate acquaintance with, the contents of the Old Testament.

The Scriptures, then—that is, a *written* copy of the whole Old Testament—evidently circulated in Palestine in the times of Christ. That, I suppose, will be admitted to be as clear as any point possibly can be. All the Jews, of whatever station, then had, or might have, in their hands the whole of the Old Testament writings. That is implied in almost every chapter of the Gospels, and will, I cannot but believe, be universally acknowledged. In what *form*, then, let us ask, did the Bible of the Jews then circulate among them ? What was the *language* through which they obtained that knowledge of the Old Testament, which, it is plain, was at the time commonly possessed ?

Before investigation, any one of the three following answers might be given to this question. Some might reply that the Old Testament Scriptures were then current among the Jews *in the original Hebrew* ; others, that they were circulated *in an Aramaic translation* ; and others, that they were generally known only *by means of the Septuagint version*. We have now to consider which of these

three views can be shown to be the only one in accordance with the facts of the case.

First, then, as to the hypothesis that *the Old Testament Scriptures* circulated among the Jews of our Saviour's day *in the original Hebrew*.

Ninety-nine persons out of a hundred probably imagine that such was the case. They know that the Old Testament was composed in Hebrew: they believe that, as a matter of course, the Jews spoke Hebrew; and so the question is settled,—the Hebrew Bible was commonly known and read in Palestine in the times of Christ. This idea is, no doubt, popularly kept up by the fact that we several times read in the New Testament of people having spoken in Hebrew. Thus, in Acts xxi. 40, we are told that St. Paul addressed the Jews “in the Hebrew tongue.” But, as every scholar knows, that was a very different dialect from the ancient Hebrew, in which the books of the Old Testament were composed. This is now quite a commonplace in Biblical discussions, and will hardly bear further repetition. It has recently been expressed as follows:—“Long before the time of Christ, the Jews had ceased to speak Hebrew. In the New Testament, no doubt, we read once and again of the Hebrew tongue as spoken and understood by the people of Palestine; but the language which is called Hebrew in the New Testament was

a dialect as unlike to the Hebrew of the Bible as German is to English—a different language, although a kindred one. This language is called Hebrew, because it was spoken by the Hebrews, just as the Spanish Jews in Constantinople at the present day call their Spanish jargon Hebrew. It was a kind of Syriac or Aramaic, which the Jews had gradually learned in place of Hebrew, after their return from captivity, when they found themselves a small hand-ful living in the midst of nations who spoke Aramaic, and with whom they had constant dealings.”* To quote only one other authority on this subject, the illustrious German scholar Bleek, referring to the times of Christ, remarks, “The ancient Hebrew had already for a long time been, even to the Jews of Palestine, a dead language, the knowledge of which, so far as it was necessary for the reading of the Holy Scriptures, continued only among those who were devoted to such a special study.”† Accordingly, we find that even Josephus, who prided himself especially on his Jewish learning, shows conclusively in his works that he had only a very imperfect acquaintance with ancient Hebrew.

Let the reader mark, then, how the case really stands. The Old Testament was to the great majority of Jews, in our Lord’s day, a sealed book,

* *The Old Test. in Jew. Ch.*, p. 47. † *Einl. in das N. T.*, p. 53.

so far as its original language was concerned. They knew nothing of the Old Hebrew tongue. When confronted with it, they were as helpless as would be an Englishman, acquainted only with his own language, if referred to the Bible in German. It is obvious, therefore, that "the Scriptures," so often spoken of, and appealed to, in the Gospels, could not have been the Old Testament books in their original language.

Next, however, it has been maintained that the sacred writings then circulated among the Jews *in an Aramaic translation*.

This is quite a common supposition, but it may easily be shown to be baseless. Let the reader only consider what he is required by it to believe. He is asked to conceive, first, that a written Aramaic version of the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures existed in Palestine during the times of Christ and His Apostles, of which not a single shred has descended to our day. As we have already seen, the Samaritan Pentateuch has been preserved throughout all the ages to our own times, but it seems that a version of the whole Old Testament once circulated in Palestine, which vanished as completely as does a cloud of vapour in the morning sky! He is asked to believe, next, in the existence of an Aramaic version, of which, apparently, the

great Jewish historian never heard. As has been already remarked, Josephus gives a particular account of the formation of the Septuagint, and frequently uses it in his writings; but he is dumb as to any Aramaic translation, and, so far as it appears, never knew of its existence! He, the modern reader, is asked to believe, thirdly, that an Aramaic version circulated in Palestine, although none of the Fathers of the Church make the faintest allusion to it, or preserve to us the slightest specimen of its contents. We know how zealously such men as Origen and Jerome devoted themselves to Biblical studies, and how deeply interested they were in all that bore upon their successful prosecution. Yet here, we are told, was a precious version of the Old Testament, specially precious as having, according to the supposition, been the Bible of Christ and His apostles, which these great scholars and theologians did not deem worthy of the least attention, and which they do not even mention in their writings! He is asked to believe, finally—this sore-tried modern reader—that a written Aramaic version of the Old Testament was generally current in Palestine during the lifetime of our Lord, although a most stringent rule prevailed that no such version should be formed. The interpreter was solemnly enjoined “‘*not to use a written Targum*’ but to deliver his translation *vivâ voce*,’ lest it might

appear that he was reading out of the Torah (the Law) itself, and thus the Scriptures be held responsible for what were his own *dicta*." So profound was this detestation of written versions in Aramaic, that we are told that Gamaliel the elder, who lived in the first century of our era, having heard of such a translation of the Book of Job "caused it to be hidden and buried out of sight."* Yet, in spite of all this, we are required to believe that a written Aramaic version of the entire Old Testament circulated freely and familiarly in Palestine in the days of Christ and His Apostles! Enough, and more than enough, has surely been said to refute any such supposition.

We come, then, to a consideration of the third and only remaining view, that the Jews of our Saviour's day were indebted for their acquaintance with the Old Testament to *the Septuagint translation*.

The two former suppositions having been excluded, we are logically compelled to rest in this one. And all the facts warrant our doing so. We know that the Greek version had for long been in existence before the time of Christ. We know, as has been shown in a preceding chapter, that it was very highly, yea, even superstitiously, esteemed by the Jews; and we have only to open the Greek New Testa-

* Deutsch's *Literary Remains*, p. 324.

ment, in order to find how often it is quoted *verbatim* by the sacred writers. This is the case even in passages such as Acts xv. 16, 17, Heb. i. 6, etc., where the meaning of the Greek is totally different from that of the Hebrew, showing how thoroughly the writers trusted the Septuagint version, and how dependent they were upon it for their knowledge and use of the Old Testament.

It is true that there are some comparatively few passages in which the New Testament writers depart from the Greek translation, and express with greater accuracy the import of the Hebrew original. Now, what is the inference to be derived from this fact? Is it that men like Peter and John were acquainted with ancient Hebrew, and so could correct the Greek version for themselves? This has often been asserted or implied; and we find in a recent learned writer an affirmation to the effect that, "in the times of the New Testament, the Greek and Hebrew Bibles were current side by side; and men like the Apostles, who knew both languages, used either text indifferently." * Such is quite the loose, popular way of stating the matter, but it will not bear serious consideration. Let it be remembered that, as already said, even the learned historian, Josephus, with all his acknowledged erudition, had only a most im-

* *The Old Test. in the Jew. Ch.*, p. 102.

perfect knowledge of Hebrew, and then say what likelihood there is that humble fishermen of Galilee were familiar with that language. Let it moreover be considered that, after a most careful study of St. Paul's writings, Professor Jowett has reached the conclusion that even they do not "offer any certain proof that the Apostle was acquainted with the Hebrew original." * Now, if this be the case with respect to St. Paul, much less can it be held that "unlearned and ignorant men," like St. Peter and St. John—men certainly destitute of what was then technically known as "learning" among the Jews, were so well acquainted with the Hebrew of the Old Testament as to be able to quote from it at pleasure. In fact, Dr. R. Smith himself plainly appears to contradict, by implication, the statement quoted from him above. Thus, at p. 73, he speaks of "*learned* Jews who read Hebrew," and the Apostles had certainly no claim to be ranked among such ; and again, still more clearly at p. 48, he states that "before the time of Christ, people who were *not scholars* had ceased to understand Hebrew altogether." This surely settles the question as to the use by the Apostles of the original Hebrew text.

Those occasional deviations from the Greek version, observable in the New Testament, may

* *Epistles of St. Paul*, i. 401.

easily be accounted for on other grounds than the obviously untenable one, that the writers possessed a knowledge of ancient Hebrew. In the first place, they may have used a different text of the Septuagint from that now current. We still wait, as has already been said, for a trustworthy edition of the Greek version ; * and when that has been provided, we may find that it really is in harmony with the quotations as they stand in the New Testament.† In the second place, there is no difficulty in supposing that “revised versions” of the Septuagint, which was, as it were, the authorised version of the Jews, then circulated in Palestine. It is certain that from the

* It is to be feared that the insertion of the word *not* in Lev. xi. 6, is a glaring example of intentional corruption in the Septuagint text. “Th s,” says the late Dean Stanley, “is the earliest instance of the falsification of Scripture to meet the demands of science ; and (he justly adds) it has been followed in later times by the various efforts which have been made to twist the earlier chapters of Genesis into apparent agreement with the last results of geology, representing days not to be days, morning and evening not to be morning and evening, the deluge not to be the deluge, and the ark not to be the ark.” (*Sermons on Special Occasions*, p. 202.) But the point whether “not” (“cheweth *not* the cud”) originally existed in the text of the Septuagint still remains to be determined.

† A remarkable illustration is found in Matt. xxvi. 31. It has been argued that in the quotation there made, the Evangelist departs from the Septuagint. And so he does from the *common* text ; but his words are all but identical with the text of the Septuagint as it stands in the Alexandrian manuscript.

first there were mistakes in the Greek version, just as there are in our common English version, and the Apostles may have availed themselves of well-known corrections of these in several of their quotations. In the third place, where the passages quoted agree perfectly neither with the Hebrew nor the Greek, we have only to remember that the writers were not in the habit of turning up chapter and verse in making their quotations, but trusted, in general, to memory. Hence the deviations from both texts which may occasionally be observed.

The Greek version, then, was really the Bible of our Lord and His Apostles. And, accepting this conclusion, we at once understand that ready access to, and familiar acquaintance with, the contents of the Old Testament, which are everywhere taken for granted as possessed by the Jews of our Saviour's day. Few, indeed, among them could have made anything of the ancient Hebrew text, had it been spread out before them. And fewer still, probably, could have afforded to purchase a copy of the entire Hebrew Scriptures. We have conclusive evidence as to the heavy cost even of a copy of the law by itself; and to acquire the whole Bible must have taxed the resources of even the wealthiest in the land. Greek books, on the other hand, were cheap and abundant, so that the poor man, as well as the rich, might easily possess his Bible in that language.

And now let us glance at some inferences which necessarily follow from the conclusion which has been reached.

First, we learn that *Greek was the language usually spoken by our Lord and His Apostles.*

This is an inevitable corollary from what has been already established. If it was the Greek Scriptures which Christ constantly quoted, and to which He so frequently referred (Matt. xxi. 42 ; Mark xii. 24 ; Luke xxiv. 32 ; John vii. 42, etc.), then Greek must have been the language which He habitually used in His addresses to the people. This, of course, left Him free occasionally to adopt a word from the Hebrew *patois* which existed side by side with the Greek, and which was in use for the purposes of familiar intercourse. The relation between the two languages was very similar to that which now holds between English and Gaelic in many parts of the Highlands of Scotland. Greek was the language of literature and public life, Aramaic the language of homely fellowship and domestic converse. The Jews were, in fact, bilingual, and hence we find a few Aramaic expressions, such as *Raca*, *Corban*, *Mammon*, etc., introduced into the discourses of Christ, while nothing could have been more natural than that the gracious utterance, "Maid, arise," should have been whispered to the damsel in the familiar *Talitha cumi* (Mark v. 41) of her childhood.

Still, the assertion is constantly repeated by one writer after another, that "*Aramaic* was the language which our Lord spoke." Evidence to the contrary seems totally disregarded. But I would once more humbly request any who have hitherto maintained that position to look at it in the light of the above argument. Let them consider what was really the Bible in the hands of Christ and His disciples, and then say what was the language which they habitually employed.*

I am simply amazed at the line of argument which satisfies some able writers in dealing with this subject. Thus says Dr. Farrar, in reference to these words uttered by Christ upon the cross,—*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*—"The fact that thus in His last moments Jesus speaks in Aramaic would seem to prove that this had been the ordinary language of His life."† Why so? We have exactly as much

* So inveterate is the prejudice against the conclusion suggested by the above argument, that I am not unprepared still to be met with the statement in certain quarters,—"*We cannot believe* that the common people among the Jews spoke Greek of any kind,"—and so on. Facts have been, and may still be, disregarded, but they nevertheless prove, as the late Cardinal Wiseman saw and acknowledged, that "in the times of Josephus, even slaves were acquainted with the Greek language." (*Horæ Syriacæ*, p. 71. Compare Josephus, *Antiq.* xiv. 10, 3, xviii. 8, 5; *Wars*, v. 7, 4, etc.)

† *Life of Christ*, vol. ii., p. 415.

proof that the other *six* cries of Christ upon the cross were uttered in Greek, as that this *one* was expressed in Aramaic. Throughout his whole work Dr. Farrar never really faces the question, notwithstanding the many occasions on which it presents itself to the critical scholar.

The difficulty which Josephus speaks of in the concluding chapter of his "Antiquities," as having beset him in the composition of that work, used to be brought forward as a proof that Greek could not have been commonly known among the Jews in the time of Christ. But this argument is now abandoned. All admit that the Jews were then bilingual, knowing both Greek and Aramaic, so that the difficulty which Josephus felt consisted not in writing such Hebraic Greek as is found in the New Testament, but Greek which should approach the style of the classical historians.

The position of Josephus was thus analogous to that of Scotch writers of English in the last century. They confess that they experienced the greatest difficulty in avoiding Scotticisms, and expressing themselves in pure idiomatic English. As Josephus styles the Greek "an alien and outlandish tongue," so might they have spoken with reference to the language of England. An apt illustration recently fell under my notice. Referring to some advice given him in early days by an aged and intelligent

friend, a writer in one of our magazines says, "He cautioned me with entire gravity, to be punctilious in writing English; never to forget that I was a Scotchman, that *English was a foreign tongue*, and that if I attempted the colloquial, I should certainly be shamed: the remark was apposite, I suppose, in the days of David Hume."* Now this exactly represents the view for which I plead as to the linguistic condition of Palestine in the time of Christ. Greek of a certain kind was known and used habitually by the Jews of the period, just as English of a certain kind was known and used habitually by Scotchmen in the days of Hume. But as Scotch writers had then to strive very hard, and often with imperfect success, to express themselves in correct English, so was it with Josephus in dealing with the Greek language.

Secondly, we are led by the above argument to *a simple and satisfactory solution of the great problem of the Gospels.*

That problem is how to account both for the *similarities* and the *diversities* which exist between the first three Evangelists. Every one must have noticed how strikingly they agree in the language which they use, and then again how strangely

* *Cornhill Magazine*, Aug. 1882, p. 154.

they differ in the expressions which, in the midst of so much verbal harmony, are employed. There thus emerges the puzzling literary question, How are these two sets of co-existing facts to be accounted for? and the providing of a satisfactory answer to that question has been the source of enormous difficulty and labour to Biblical critics.

Some have had recourse to the almost desperate supposition that the Evangelists *copied* from each other. But the utmost diversity of opinion, or rather conjecture, has existed as to who was the original writer, and who the copyists. One of the Evangelists has, in turn, held the place of honour, and then again been degraded from it. But, while the theory that they copied from each other might, in a rude and unsatisfactory way, account for the coincidences between them, it wholly fails to explain the diversities. Let us take, for example, the three descriptions which are given of the call of Levi or Matthew, and of the events which immediately followed.

MATT ix. 9--17.

And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And

MARK ii. 13--22.

And he went forth again by the seaside; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi, the son

LUKE v. 27--39.

And after these things he went forth, and beheld a publican, named Levi, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow me. And he forsook all,

he arose, and followed him. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with the publicans and sinners? But when he heard it, he said, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Then come to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast. And no man putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment; for that which should fill it up taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made. Neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins: else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish: but they

of Alphæus, sitting at the place of toll: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. And it came to pass that he was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many, and they followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners. And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting: and they come and say unto him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day. No man seweth

and rose up, and followed him. And Levi made him a great feast in his house: and there was a great multitude of publicans and of others that were sitting at meat with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with the publicans and sinners. And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And they said unto him, The disciples of John fast often, and make supplications; likewise also the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink. And Jesus said unto them, Can ye make the sons of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come; and when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then will they fast in those days. And he spake also a parable unto them; No man rendeth a piece from a new garment, and putteth it upon an old garment; else he will rend the new, and also the piece from the new will not agree with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins;

put new wine into fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved.

a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment; else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made. And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine perisheth, and the skins: but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins.

else the new wine will burst the skins, and itself will be spilled, and the skins will perish. But new wine must be put into fresh wine-skins. And no man having drunk old wine desireth new; for he saith the old is good.*

Now, any one glancing over these passages will at once perceive how strikingly they agree, not only in substance, but in language. He will also, however, observe that they differ as strikingly, and that in a way which forbids the thought that one writer copied from the others. As has been well said, "The three accounts are in matter nearly identical, and in diction so minutely and unaccountably varied, as to declare here, as elsewhere, their independence of one another, except in having had some common source from which they have more or less deflected." † The copying hypothesis, then, as to the origin of the first three Gospels, must be dismissed.

But some other very elaborate schemes have been devised to account for the phenomena in question. With these the names of Bishop Marsh in this country, and of Eichhorn in Germany, are specially

* Revised Version, as more exact than the Authorised.

† Alford on Mark ii. 13—22.

identified. They are now, however, quite abandoned by scholars, and it would serve no good purpose to set them, with all their intricacies and perplexities before the reader. Let us rather look, for a little, at the aspect which the problem of the Gospels presents when contemplated in the light of that conclusion we have reached above.

One of the most puzzling elements in it is completely removed. As long as it is supposed that Christ spoke in Hebrew, the identity which is observed among the Evangelists in the reports which they have given of His speeches, must appear truly marvellous, if it does not even approach the miraculous. They had, each for himself, to translate from Hebrew into Greek, and yet they hit, in most cases, upon the very same expressions. Surely, the fable told with respect to the authors of the Septuagint is at last realized ! But can any one imagine that these independent translators from one language into another could have attained to such harmony in the words which they selected as is displayed by the Evangelists ? The idea is preposterous, and no sane man will deem it worthy of serious consideration.

The aspect of the problem, however, is entirely altered when we take into account the fact demonstrated above, that Christ did not speak in Hebrew, but in Greek. The impossible factor has now been eliminated from it, and we see our way to a solution.

Christ spoke in the *same* language in which the Evangelists have reported His words. As a matter of course, therefore, they could not but verbally agree in the reports which they furnished of His addresses. And it is to be observed that it is in their statements of what was *said* that the authors of the Gospels mostly agree, while they vary in their descriptions of the attending circumstances. This is exactly what happens on every like occasion. The reporters who give an account of a public meeting will harmonize, word for word, throughout many consecutive sentences, as to the matter which was spoken, while they will inevitably differ as to the descriptions which they give of the scene, or of the individuals present. Here, then, we seem to have found a sufficiently simple and satisfactory explanation of those features, alike of harmony and diversity, presented by the first three Gospels. They agree so strikingly, because they are faithful reports of what was said; they differ so naturally, because they are the productions of three different men, who wrote independently of one another.

I am far from maintaining that all difficulties connected with the origin of the Gospels are thus removed. But I claim this much, that the problem has, at least, been greatly simplified, and brought much nearer a solution. In the conclusion reached above, that Christ and His Apostles habitually made

use of the Greek language, we find a basis for the satisfying reflection, that His words, so far as reported, are still with us in the form in which they were uttered : * while we are also furnished with the means of removing some of the greatest difficulties, which, owing to a contrary, erroneous belief, have perplexed the critical student of the New Testament. †

* Of course, unless this be granted, almost all the words which Christ actually uttered must be regarded as having perished. This supposition has sometimes been made the basis of a powerful attack on the Gospels. In an able publication sent to me some years ago, a learned Jew is represented as saying to some clergymen of the Church of England, "I will receive your sacrament, and subscribe your thirty-nine articles to-day, if you will repeat to me, as they fell from his lips, three sentences of the teaching of that revealing Emmanuel." Much more follows to the same effect ; and the argument of the sceptic is conclusively pushed home on the hypothesis that Christ did not make use of the Greek language, but of the Hebrew *fatois* of His day. — *Orthodoxy from the Hebrew Point of View*, p. 18 ff.

† See for a fuller development of the above argument "The Bible of Christ and His Apostles" (Cassell and Co.), and for many additional proofs to the same effect my "Discussions on the Gospels," Part I. (Macmillan and Co.)

CHAPTER X.

THE TALMUD AND THE TARGUMS.

THOSE English readers who take an interest in Biblical questions have doubtless often encountered the expressions *Talmud* and *Targums*, in articles or books bearing upon the Old Testament. But not improbably the terms referred to may have possessed to many only the vaguest significance, and may have appeared as if wrapped in a veil of mystery which they had neither time nor opportunity to penetrate. Perhaps this little book may fall into the hands of some such readers. It is indeed specially meant for those who, without being professed scholars or theologians, are intelligent students of the Bible, and wish to become acquainted with all that may, without the use of erudite or technical language, be told them in connection with it. The object of this chapter, therefore, will be to explain, in as simple a manner as possible, the seemingly strange appellations "Talmud" and "Targums," and thus to clear away that obscurity which

to not a few readers may hitherto have lingered round the words.

“What is the Talmud?”

These were the opening words of a famous article which appeared in one of our leading Reviews some fifteen years ago.* The article excited great interest in our own and other countries, but certainly did not answer with anything like accuracy or fairness its own opening question. Written in a style of the greatest liveliness and vigour, its whole tendency was to mislead. The author, while carefully abstaining from any precision as to the dates of the documents he quoted, nevertheless left the impression that these were anterior to Christianity, and that the New Testament was, in fact, largely dependent upon the Talmud for its phraseology and doctrines. What had been deemed the most striking and original of Christ's sayings were thus insinuated to have been merely the echo of sentiments which really circulated among the Jews before His day. Nowhere, indeed, did the learned writer of the article definitely commit himself to such an assertion, but that this was the drift of his production soon appeared from the use which was made of it by others. Knowing nothing of the subject but what they gathered from Mr. Deutsch's clever handling of it, writers in some of

* *Quarterly Review*, Oct., 1867.

the ablest of our periodicals were completely hoodwinked by it, and allowed themselves to be betrayed into the most groundless statements. Thus said one: "As for the old idea that *the Talmud was not written before the Christian dispensation*, and therefore contains plagiarisms of the New Testament, *that has by this time been given up*, along with the notion that all languages are derived from Hebrew, or that the cuneiform inscriptions are the work of worms." *

This, of course, was the utterance simply of crass ignorance. How differently has one who really knows something of the Talmud, and has done his part to make what is best in it known to others, recently expressed himself! "To assert," says Mr. Hershon, "that the New Testament owes many of its sublime teachings to the Talmud, which was *not committed to writing till four centuries after Christ*, presumes rather too much on the credulity even of unbelievers, and none are more credulous than they." †

What then is the TALMUD?

It is an enormous and chaotic repertory of Jewish thought, tradition, and speculation on almost all conceivable subjects. The magnitude of the work may be inferred from the fact that, as first printed

* *Saturday Review*, Nov. 2, 1867.

† *Treasures of the Talmud*, p. 88. By Paul J. Hershon. 1882.

in 1520-23, and as generally printed still, it consists of twelve immense folio volumes! The contents are classed under two general heads—the Mishnah and the Gemarah. The term “Mishnah” means *repetition*, being based on the Pentateuch, and *repeating*, as it were, while enlarging the original text.* The term “Gemarah,” again, denotes *completion*, being a sort of commentary on the Mishnah, which it develops and explains at vast length, thus *completing*, as was supposed, the Mosaic legislation. All this taken together constitutes the “Talmud,” which is a word that means *study* or *learning*, and this was the oral or unwritten law of the Jews, as distinguished from the Pentateuch, the *written* law, which was always regarded, in theory at least, as the supreme and unchangeable authority.

The Mishnah was begun to be written down by the celebrated Rabbi Judah about the middle of the second century after Christ, and was completed by his disciples some time about the close of the century. It is by far the most valuable of the rabbinical writings, and doubtless preserves traditions that had been orally handed down from a remote antiquity. The Gemarah was gradually added on to this in the

* Such is the common explanation, but Deutsch maintains (*Lit. Rem.*, p. 332) that *Mishnah* means “learning,” and is synonymous with *Talmud* and *Torah*. This does not appear probable.

course of the next three hundred years.* Many rabbis took part in the work, and by inserting in it, very much at random as would appear, all sorts of laws, customs, explanations, and illustrations, gradually built up the enormous structure which is known as the Talmud at the present day. Its multifarious contents have been divided into what are called "Halachah" and "Haggadah," the first of these words meaning *rule*, and referring to expositions and enlargements of the Pentateuchal laws, while the second denotes *legend*, and includes allegories, parables, and narratives of the most varied character.† The legal and the legendary elements thus join together to form that stupendous pile of literary matter which has so long and perniciously stood between the Jews and the pure Word of God, and which, in spite of the sufferings which adherence to it has frequently caused them, most of the descendants of Abraham still regard with superstitious reverence.

As has recently been well remarked, "Implicit

* The Talmudic period may be said to extend from about 200 A.D. to 600 A.D. The Jerusalem Talmud was formed about 300 A.D., and the Babylonian Talmud, which is to be understood as referred to when *the* Talmud is mentioned, was not completed before 600 A.D.

† Under *Haggadah* chiefly may be classed *Midrash*—any popular exposition of the sacred books with a view to edification. This is often mixed up with translation. Deutsch happily refers

adherence to the teaching of the Talmud has often drawn, like a lightning conductor, the electricity of persecution upon the hapless and hopeless Jews, and doubtless does so still. Let them but cast their idol, the Talmud, 'to the moles and to the bats,' and they will fare like other men; they will enjoy liberty, and be free from persecution. Take the case of the Karaite* Jews, for example, in bigoted Russia. They command more respect there, and enjoy greater personal freedom and social privileges than their so-called orthodox brethren. The former, not being influenced by the Talmud, make far better citizens, and the Russian Government is not so blind as not to observe the marked difference between the one and the other, nor so unjust as not to signify its preference in a special manner."†

While it is certainly true, as the writer just quoted observes, that "the special pleading of Deutsch in his writings cunningly drapes all that is bad in the book, and hides its ungainly parts," we may, in so far, also agree with him when he says that "the Talmud has its attractions, and they are neither few

to Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," as a sort of Haggadah in our own language. (*Lit. Rem.*, p. 47.)

* Those Jews who hold by the *written* law, and seek to expound it, not according to tradition, but by fair grammatical interpretation. (Comp. above, p. 154.)

† *Treasures of the Talmud*, p. xii.

nor small, but its moral poverty sadly detracts from its charms, and, in fact, serves to make it unsightly.”* I shall now set before the reader some specimens of what are called “The *Treasures* of the Talmud,” and shall leave him to infer of what nature those vastly larger portions of it must be which cannot be embraced under such a designation.†

* *Ibid.*, p. xi.

† Here the term *Cabala* or *Kabala* may be noticed. The word properly denotes “tradition,” and refers to that spurious science among the Jews which professes to bring out the secret meaning of Scripture. Every letter, word, and accent of the Law is supposed to have a mystic sense, and by studying that the Cabalists pretended even to be able to predict future events. Longfellow, in “The Golden Legend,” has well set forth the exaggerated importance which the Jews attached to their various “traditions” as compared with Scripture, when he makes a rabbi express himself as follows:—

“ I am the Rabbi Ben Israel,
Throughout this village known full well,
And, as my scholars all will tell,
Learnèd in things divine ;
The Kabala and Talmud hoar
Than all the prophets prize I more ;
For *water* is all Bible lore,
But Mishna is strong *wine*.”

There is, of course, an anachronism in ascribing such sentiments to a contemporary of Christ. But at the present day “only he is an orthodox Jew, who recognizes the Talmudic interpretation of Holy Writ as that handed down from Moses.” (*Contemporary Review*, Sept., 1882, p. 372.) Let the reader consider this claim in the light of some of the interpretations afterwards brought forward.

“Whence,” it is asked, “do we ascertain that God’s anger lasts only for a moment? (Ps. xxx. 5,) ‘His anger endureth but a moment: in His favour is life.’ If thou wilt, I would prove it from this (Isa. xxvi. 20), ‘Hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.’ At what time of the day is God angry? Abaii says, ‘During the first three hours of the day, when the cock’s comb turns white.’ But the cock’s comb turns white at all the other hours of the day. Well, but then there are still some streaks of red left on the comb, which is not the case when God is angry, for then it is quite white. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi used to suffer much from a certain Min (*i.e.*, a heretic, or a Christian). One day he got a cock, and placed it at the foot of his bed, in order to find out the time when God was angry, intending at the nick of time to curse the Min. But when the time came, the rabbi fell asleep. On waking and noticing that the opportunity was gone, he remarked (Ps. cxlv. 9), ‘His tender mercies are over all His works,’ and it is also written (Prov. xvii. 26), ‘Also to punish the just is not good, therefore it is not right for me so to do.’” We learn in the name of Rabbi Meir, “When the kings (of the nations) put their crowns upon their heads and worship the sun, God instantly becomes angry.” (*Avodah Zarah*, folio 4 B.)

The translator naively appends as a note, "This tell-tale faculty of the cock's comb, which is corroborated in *Sanhedrin* (fol. 105 B), has not been noticed by naturalists of the present day." *

The following is an example of that absurd quibbling which is so characteristic of the Talmud in dealing with Scripture:—

"He who gives of his seed to Molech is not guilty, unless he has both given over his child to Molech, and also caused it to pass through the fire. If he has given it over to Molech, and has not caused it to pass through the fire, or if he has caused it to pass through the fire, but has not given it over to Molech, he is not guilty. . . . If one has caused *all* his children to pass through the fire, he is not guilty; for it is said (Lev. xviii. 21), '*Any of thy seed,*' and it is not said, '*all thy seed.*'" †

A few samples may be added of the rabbinical style of interpretation:—

"The Holy One—blessed be He!—will in the future bring together Mount Sinai and Tabor and Carmel, and place Jerusalem on the top of them; for it is said (Isa. ii. 2), 'The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains.'" (*Midrash Tillim*, fol. 39 A.)

"Jerusalem will in the future be extended in

* *Treasures of the Talmud*, p. 156.

† *Ibid.*, p. 179.

every direction, till it reaches the gate of Damascus, where the returned exiles shall come and rest, that it might be fulfilled which is said (Zech. ix. 1), 'Damascus shall be the rest.'" (*Shir Hashirim Rabba*, fol. 274 A.)

"It is written (Isa. lxvi. 23), 'It shall come to pass from one new moon to another,' etc. But how is it possible that all flesh shall come upon every new moon and every Sabbath to Jerusalem? Rabbi Levi said, 'In the future, Jerusalem will be as the land of Israel, and the land of Israel shall be as the whole world.' But how will they come from the ends of the world every new moon and every Sabbath? The clouds will come and convey them to Jerusalem, where they will repeat their morning prayer, and this it is for which the prophet praises them (Isa. lx. 8), 'Who are these that fly as a cloud?'" etc. (*Yalkut Shimoni*, fol. 57 B.)*

We meet with the following amazing statements:—

"Nero embraced Judaism, and Rabbi Meir was one of his descendants." (*Gittin*, fol. 55.)

"As a reward for the forty-two sacrifices which Balak the king of Moab offered, he was accounted worthy to become the ancestor of Ruth, of whom came Solomon, who wrote (1 Kings iii. 4), "A thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer." (*Soteh*, fol. 47 A.)

* *Ibid.*, v. 209.

Of Titus, when at sea, we are told, "Then came a Bath Kol, a voice from heaven, and said, 'O thou wicked man, son of a wicked man, and descendant of Esau the wicked, go ashore. I have a creature insignificant in my world ; go thou and fight with that.' (This creature was a gnat, and was termed insignificant, because it has a mouth to take in food, but has no outlet to discharge it.) Immediately he landed, a gnat flew into his nostrils, and made its way to his brain, upon which it fed for a period of seven years. Once he happened to pass a blacksmith's forge, and the noise of the hammer caused the gnat to cease working on his brain. 'Aha!' said Titus, 'here's a remedy.' He ordered a blacksmith continually to hammer before him, paying him four zouzim a day if a Gentile blacksmith, but paying nothing to a Jewish one ; for said he to the latter, 'Thou art well paid by seeing me, thy enemy, in such a painful condition.' For thirty days he felt relief, but after that period all the hammering was in vain. Rabbi Phinehas, the son of Aruba, testified, saying, 'I myself was among the magnates of Rome when an inquest was made upon Titus, and upon opening his brain they found in it the gnat, as big as a swallow, weighing two selas. Others say it was as large as a pigeon a year old, weighing two litres. Abaii said, 'We found its mouth to be of copper, and its claws of iron.' Titus willed that after his death

his body should undergo cremation, and his ashes should be scattered over the surface of the seven seas, that the God of the Jews might not find him, and bring him to judgment." * (*Gittin*, fol. 56 B.)

The following are one or two specimens of the grotesque conceptions and ludicrous exaggerations of the rabbis:—

"Rabbah bar bar Channah said, 'I myself saw a frog which was as large as the village of Acra in Hagronia. How large was Acra in Hagronia? It consisted of sixty houses. A serpent came and swallowed the frog, and a female raven swallowed the serpent, and then flew off, and perched on a tree. Come, see how strong this tree must have been.' Rav Pappa bar Shemuel said, 'I should never have believed it had I not been present myself.'" (*Bava Bathra*, fol. 73 B.)

"Rabbah bar bar Channah said, 'We were once on board ship, and we saw a certain fish, upon whose nostrils a creature fastened itself, and killed him. The dead fish was washed ashore by the waves of the sea, and sixty villages were swamped in consequence. Sixty other towns fed upon the carcase, and sixty towns besides them salted what was left over. From one eye-ball only they filled three hundred barrels of oil. When we visited the same

* *Ibid.*, p. 260.

place a year afterwards, we found that they had cut up the bones of the fish for the rebuilding of the demolished cities.'” (*Ibid.*)

“Rabbi Yohanan related, ‘Once we were sailing in a ship, when we descried a fish which lifted up its head out of the sea. His eyes were like two moons, and the water was spouted from his nostrils like two rivers of Sura.’ Rav Saphra related, ‘We were once on shipboard, and saw a fish which put his head up out of the sea; he had horns, and upon them was written, “I am the meanest creature of the sea, and I am three hundred miles in length, and am now bound for the mouth of the leviathan for his meal to-day.”’ Rav Ashi said this was the sea-goat, which diggeth in the bottom of the sea with its horns in search of food.”* (*Ibid.*, fol. 74A.)

The reader will now feel that enough, and perhaps more than enough, of this trash has been set before him. The apology which some present for it is that such stories (with others of a kind which cannot be quoted) are *cryptographs*, meaning that they are not to be literally understood, but must be mystically interpreted. If so, some of the “initiated” ought surely to come forward and do the necessary work. Such attempts as are made in the Talmud itself to attach an allegorical significance to some of its

* *Ibid.*, p. 305 ff

narratives do not strike one as very successful. And even after making every allowance for the exuberance of Eastern fancy and the severity of Western taste and judgment, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that in the Babylonian Talmud of the Jewish rabbis there is presented to us the most stupendous mass of childishness and folly that was ever collected. Of course, in a work of such vast dimensions, all cannot be bad. There are some very wise maxims, and some really beautiful legends; and that this aspect of the work may also be presented, I shall now set a few favourable specimens of these before the reader.*

“The place honours not the man, ’tis the man who gives honour to the place.”

“If a word spoken in its time is worth one piece of money, silence in *its* time is worth two.”

“When wine enters the head, the secret flies out.”

“The camel desired horns, and his ears were taken from him.”

“Silence is the fence round wisdom.”

“Rather be the tail among lions than the head among foxes.”

“Truth is heavy, therefore few care to carry it.”

“Descend a step in choosing thy wife: ascend a step in choosing thy friend.”

* I am indebted for what immediately follows to H. Polano's *Selections from the Talmud*, p. 307 ff.

“Commit a sin twice, and it will not seem to thee a crime.”

“Despise no man, and deem nothing impossible : every man hath his hour, and every thing its place.”

“The best preacher is the heart : the best teacher is time : the best book is the world : the best friend is God.”

“There is a great difference between one who can feel ashamed before his own soul, and one who is only ashamed before his fellow-men.”

The Bride and Bridegroom.

“There was once a man who pledged his dearest faith to a maiden, beautiful and true. For a time all passed pleasantly, and the maiden lived in happiness. But then the man was called from her side, and left her ; long she waited, but he did not return. Friends pitied her, and rivals mocked her ; tauntingly they pointed at her, and said, ‘He has left thee ; he will never come back.’ The maiden sought her chamber and read in secret the letters in which he promised to be ever faithful, ever true. Weeping she read them, but they brought comfort to her heart : she dried her eyes, and doubted not.

“A joyous day dawned for her : the man she loved returned ; and when he learned that others had doubted, and asked her how she had preserved her

faith, she showed his letters to him, declaring her eternal trust.

“Israel, in misery and captivity, was mocked by the nations: her hopes of redemption were made a laughing-stock; her sages were scoffed at, her holy men derided. Into her synagogues, into her schools, went Israel; she read the letters which her God had written, and believed in the holy promises which they contained. God will in time redeem her; and when He says, ‘How could you alone be faithful of all the mocking nations?’ she will point to the law, and answer, ‘Had not Thy law been my delight, I should long since have perished in my affliction’ (Ps. cxix. 92).”

Truth.

“When God was about to create man, the angels gathered round Him. Some of them, opening their lips, exclaimed, ‘Create, O God, a being who shall praise Thee from earth, even as we in heaven sing Thy glory.’ But others said, ‘Hear us, Almighty King; create no more! The glorious harmony of the heavens, which Thou hast sent to earth, will be by man disturbed, destroyed.’ Then silence fell upon the contesting hosts, as the Angel of Mercy appeared before the throne of grace on bended knees. Sweet was the voice which said entreatingly, ‘O Father, create Thou man; make him Thine own noble image-

With heavenly pity will I fill his heart, with sympathy towards every living thing impress his being : through him will they find cause to praise Thee.' Then the Angel of Mercy ceased, and the Angel of Peace, with tearful eyes, spoke thus : 'O God, create him not ! Thy peace he will disturb ; the flow of blood will follow sure his coming. Confusion, horror, war, will blot the earth, and Thou wilt no longer find a pleasant place among Thy works on earth.' Then spoke in stern tones the Angel of Justice : 'And Thou wilt judge him, God : he shall be subject to my sway.' The Angel of Truth approached, saying, 'Cease ! O God of truth, with man Thou sendest falsehood to the earth.' Then all were silent, and out of the deep quietness the divine words came, 'Thou, O Truth, shalt go to earth with him, and yet remain a denizen of heaven—betwixt heaven and earth to float, a connecting link between the two.'"

What, we have next to enquire, are the Jewish Targums ?

This point need not detain us long. The word "Targum" simply denotes *translation*, and the Jewish Targums accordingly are those versions of the Old Testament which, at varying dates, were made into the Syro-Chaldaic or Aramaic language.

As shown in the preceding chapter, *written trans-*

lations of the Scriptures into Aramaic were for a long time strictly forbidden among the Jews. But Hebrew having after the return from the captivity become a dead language, interpreters (*Meturgemanim*) were employed in the synagogues orally to translate the original into the common Aramaic, until, as would appear, the general acquaintance with Greek which was acquired by the people led to the abolition of the office.* And even while these "interpreters" were needed and permitted, they were far from being much respected or encouraged. The following is the account which Deutsch gives of them:—"Persons unfit to be readers, as those whose clothes were so torn and ragged that their limbs became visible through the rents, their appearance thus not corresponding to the reverence due to the sacred word itself, or blind men were admitted to the office of a meturgeman; and, apart from there being not the slightest authority attached to their interpretations, they were liable to be stopped and silenced, publicly and ignominiously, whenever they seemed to overstep the bounds of discretion. . . . Altogether, they appear to have borne the character of empty-headed, bombastic fools."† Even had

* It is well worthy of notice that no reference whatever to such interpreters occurs in the New Testament, notwithstanding the mention which is made of the synagogue worship.

† *Lit. Rem.*, p. 326.

men of this character and standing ventured against express prohibition to form any written translations of Scripture, it is plain that these would never have become popular, or been allowed the least authority. But, as might in the circumstances have been expected, they made no such attempt. We hear of no Targum in written form before the days of Christ.

Those Targums which still exist are all of very uncertain date and authorship. This much only is certain regarding them, that the most ancient of them was not committed to writing till about the second century after Christ.

The oldest Targum extant bears the name of Onkelos. Who he was, or, indeed, whether a person of that name ever existed, is matter of speculation and dispute. Some recent writers have been disposed to identify him with Aquila, whose Greek version of the Old Testament will be hereafter described. His work consists of a very free, but, of its kind, excellent translation of the Pentateuch. For various reasons he often departs from the exact meaning of the original. Thus, as is well known, one of the commonest Hebrew words for *God*, "Elohim," is in reality a plural form. Christian divines have frequently seen in this, if not a proof, yet a support, of the doctrine of the Trinity. But it seems to have made quite a different impression on the mind of Onkelos. To him it appeared liable to suggest a

multiplicity of deities, and therefore he substitutes Jehovah for it. He also changes anthropomorphic expressions which are applied to God, and any other forms of words which seemed lowering to the Divine majesty. Thus, in Gen. xi. 5, instead of "And Jehovah *came down* to see the city," the Targum has "And Jehovah *revealed Himself*;" while in Exod. xv. 11, instead of "Who is like unto Thee, O Jehovah, among the gods?" the rendering given is, "There is none like unto Thee, Thou art God." For these and various other reasons, this Chaldee Targum of Onkelos often departs from the strict meaning of the original Hebrew.

This is far more the case with the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Prophets, which comes next in age and value to that of Onkelos. It can hardly be deemed a translation at all. With greater propriety it might be called a paraphrase, with room made for much foreign matter, parables, allegories, and such-like, having no place in the Hebrew text. It embraces the following books—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets. It is, of course, written in Chaldee, and may most probably be assigned to the first half of the third century after Christ. Like the work of Onkelos, it issued from the learned Jewish academies which then flourished at Babylon.

The seare by far the oldest of existing Targums of

the Old Testament. Several others belonging to a later date might be mentioned, but hardly call for notice in this place.* It may simply be stated that those fragments of the Targum of Job still in existence may possibly embody some portion of what was perhaps the very first of all the Targums.

According to the Talmud, Job had no real existence. Its language respecting him is, "Job never was, and never was created," having simply been summoned into existence by an inspired poet, for the purpose of weaving round his name the most interesting and important instructions. From the same source we learn, as was formerly noticed, that an unauthorised Targum of the Book of Job was formed at a very early period of our era.

To give the English reader some idea of the character of these Jewish translations, or rather paraphrasès, of the Old Testament, a verse from our Authorised Version is subjoined side by side with the corresponding passage in the Targum of Jonathan.†

I SAMUEL xvii. 8.

AUTHORISED VERSION.

And he stood and cried
unto the armies of Israel,

TARGUM OF JONATHAN.

And he arose, and he cried unto the armies of
Israel, and said unto them, Why have you put

* See for a full and excellent account of the Targums Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, iii., pp. 1637—1665, or the same as reprinted in Deutsch's *Literary Remains*, pp. 319—403.

† Deutsch's *Lit. Rem.*, p. 378.

and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and et him come down to me.

yourselves in battle array? Am I not the Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? [I am Goliath the Philistine from Gath, who have killed the two sons of Eli, the priests Hophna and Phinehas, and carried captive the ark of the covenant of the Lord, I who have carried it to the house of Dagon, *my Error*, and it has been there in the cities of the Philistines seven months. And in every battle which the Philistines have had, I went at the head of the army, and we conquered in the battle, and we strewed the killed like the dust of the earth, and until now have the Philistines not thought me worthy to become captain of a thousand over them. And you, O children of Israel, what mighty deed has Saul the son of Kish from Gibeah done for you, that you made him king over you? If he is a valiant man, let him come out and do battle with me; but if he is a weak man], then choose for yourselves a man, and let him come out against me.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT LATER THAN THE TIME OF CHRIST.

IT is a singular fact that no less than three additional versions of the Old Testament into Greek were formed in the second century of our era. There must have been some powerful reason for this. Both Jews and Christians, as we have seen, cherished the highest esteem for the Septuagint version in the apostolic age and the times immediately succeeding it. But by-and-by a very different feeling sprang up among the Jews, and led to those strangely inconsistent utterances which are found in the Talmud with regard to the work of the Seventy. While the early rabbis expressed themselves in almost enthusiastic terms with respect to the Greek version, the later rabbis adopted a totally different tone, and allowed themselves to be betrayed into many wild sayings in consequence. They spoke of the common Greek version as an accursed thing. They averred that on the day on which the seventy translators met a supernatural darkness covered the earth, with other

statements of the same kind. Now, whence arose this change of feeling in regard to the Septuagint? Simply, as would appear, from the fact that it was deemed too favourable to the claims of Christianity. Having often the worst of the argument when an appeal was made to Messianic passages as contained in the Septuagint, the Jews desired a version which might embarrass them less in their controversies with the Christians. And hence, apparently, the origin of the first of the three versions about to be described.

The author of this version was one Aquila, a native of Pontus. Some strange stories are told regarding him by ancient writers, which are not worthy of repetition. All that we know for certain is that, from being a heathen, he became a convert to Judaism, and was employed by the Jews to translate their sacred writings into Greek. This new version was undoubtedly intended to be a rival to the Septuagint, and did indeed supplant its use among the Jews. The great characteristic of the translation of Aquila is its extreme literalism. Greek idioms and even grammar are violated, in order that an exact adherence to the Hebrew may be preserved. This literality of rendering, while worthless as to the sense, would have been most valuable as respects the text of the Old Testament, if larger portions of the version of Aquila had reached our day. But only a

few fragments remain, and these do little more than illustrate the principles on which the version was formed. There can be no doubt that Aquila was a good Hebrew scholar, and his work, though not generally liked by the Christians, is sometimes highly praised by the most learned of the Fathers, such as Origen and Jerome. The version of Aquila is referred to by Irenæus (about 185 A.D.), and appears to have been completed in the reign of Hadrian, say 129 A.D.

About half a century after Aquila, a version of the Old Testament into Greek was also formed by Theodotion. This may perhaps rather be styled a revision of the Septuagint than an absolutely new version. Its author is said to have been by birth an Ephesian, and by profession an Ebionite, that is, a member of the early sect of Christians who held a low, or merely human, view of the person of Christ. The work of Theodotion was largely used by Christians generally, and to this day his version of the Book of Daniel is usually found in printed editions of the Septuagint, in place of the translation which properly belongs to it. Theodotion, as well as Aquila, is referred to by Irenæus as having given an inadequate rendering of the Hebrew word translated "virgin" in our Authorised Version in Isa. vii. 14.

Symmachus, who is said by some of the Fathers

also to have been an Ebionite, but is called by others a Samaritan, was the author of a third Greek version, which appeared about the end of the second century. It does not seem to have been known to Irenæus, since, if so, he would probably have referred to it, as he does to the versions of Aquila and Theodotion. Very little can be said respecting the work of Symmachus. It apparently occupied a middle place among the three versions mentioned, not being so exact as that of Aquila, nor so inaccurate as that of Theodotion. The author is said to have lived under the Emperor Severus, as already indicated.

Besides these versions of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, there were also some other fragmentary Greek translations, of which Origen made use in his great work bearing the name of Hexapla. Before acquiring a knowledge of Hebrew, Origen appears to have compiled a work called the *Tetrapla*, or *Fourfold Bible*, containing the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint, and Theodotion, in parallel columns. But, after he mastered the Hebrew language, this mighty worker proceeded to the formation of a *Hexapla*, or *Sixfold Bible*, comprising first the Hebrew text, next, the same in Greek letters, and then the versions as arranged in the Tetrapla. In his greater work, according to Eusebius, he included the fragmentary translations which have been mentioned.

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We now proceed to glance at the *Syriac versions* of the Old Testament.

A special interest attaches to the earliest Syriac translation of the Old Testament, as having been the first version after the time of Christ which was made directly from the Hebrew. Its date cannot be accurately fixed. Some have argued that it was formed long before the Christian era, and others that it arose about the end of the apostolic age; but the probability is, that, like the Syriac version of the New Testament, it was made some time in the second century of our era. The celebrated Syrian writer, Ephraem, who lived in the fourth century, refers to it in terms which seem to imply that even then it was regarded as ancient; and for this reason, among others, we are led to assign its origin to the date which has been mentioned.

By *whom* this Syriac version of the Old Testament was made is utterly unknown. We cannot even say with certainty whether it sprung from a Jewish or Christian source. The fact that it was formed directly from the Hebrew would seem to point to a Jew as its author, since a knowledge of the Hebrew language hardly existed among Christians. But as the version was undoubtedly intended for Christian use, the probability is that its author, or authors, were Jews who were acquainted with ancient Hebrew, and had been converted to Christianity.

The truth, however, is that on this point we have nothing to trust to but conjecture.*

This version of the Old Testament, along with the Syriac version of the New Testament, was, at a later period, known by the name of *Peshito*, that is, *simple*, and was perhaps so called as adhering closely to the original, and avoiding allegorical interpretations. Both from its age and character as a version, it would be of supreme importance for aiding in the settlement of the true Hebrew text, were its own text in a satisfactory condition. But, unfortunately, such is not at present the case. A critical edition of the Peshito version of the Old Testament is, like a similar edition of the Septuagint, still among the desiderata of Biblical science.

Until such editions have been prepared, nothing positive can be determined as to the relation between this Syriac translation and the Septuagint. In the meantime, all that can be said is, that the Syriac version is found to be coloured from that of the Seventy, and agrees with it not unfrequently

* Canon Westcott appears to speak more strongly than the data will warrant when he says, "The Old Testament, no less than the New, was *certainly translated by a Christian*, and the whole work was probably revised and completed early in the second century, at Edessa, which was at that time the centre of an important Christian school."—*The Bible in the Church*, p. 132.

against the existing Hebrew text. But, like the Septuagint, the Syriac gives a *general* support to the Hebrew, as at present accepted.

Another Syriac version of the Old Testament was made from the *Greek* about the beginning of the seventh century of our era. This version was based on the Hexapla of Origen, formerly described. It contains the marks and references which existed in that great critical work, and is, indeed, the source from which we obtain our chief acquaintance with the results of Origen's labours in connection with the text of the Old Testament. When a critical edition of the Septuagint comes to be prepared, the version now referred to must play an important part in its construction.*

The next subject which calls for notice is a consideration of the *Latin versions* of the Old Testament.

We here enter a region of the deepest interest. With the exception of the Septuagint, no version of the Old Testament can vie in importance with the Vulgate. Both the two great classical languages have been highly honoured in connection with the sacred Scriptures. The Greek, as we have already seen, was the first language into which the Old Testament was translated, and furnished in the Septuagint version the

* Dr. Tregelles in Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, iii. 1625 ff.

Bible of the early Christians, of the inspired Apostles, yea, of the Divine Redeemer Himself. A peculiar and pre-eminent distinction has thus been conferred upon the Greek language in connection with the history of Christianity. But the Latin has hardly fallen short in glory. It was, for ages, the language of the whole Christian Church. It remains, far beyond any other tongue, the depository of sacred literature. Hymns and prayers and expositions and dissertations innumerable are enshrined in it. To this day it forms the medium through which the far-spreading Church of Rome presents her worship. It is therefore with peculiar interest that we approach the subject of the Latin versions, and inquire into the history of what is known as the Vulgate at the present day.

As might have been expected from the wide acquaintance with Greek which existed throughout the civilized world at the commencement of our era, the Septuagint version sufficed for the majority of those peoples then living under the sway of imperial Rome. In Italy especially the Greek language had taken deep root, and was everywhere current. As I have elsewhere said, "In the reign of Tiberius, as Valerius Maximus, a contemporary writer, informs us, the Senate resounded even to deafening with Greek debates; and Dio Cassius relates that the same emperor was accustomed very

frequently to hear cases argued, and himself to investigate them, in the Greek language. Suetonius bears equally striking testimony to the very general use of Greek by the Romans under Tiberius and Claudius; and, by the account which he gives of the efforts made by the former emperor to discourage its use in certain cases, shows how greatly it had encroached on the vernacular language. In the reign of Domitian, as we infer from Martial, it was proof of absolute rusticity not to be perfectly familiar with the tongue of Greece; while in the reign of Trajan, as we learn from Juvenal, that language was continually employed by his fellow-citizens for all sorts of purposes. And in these, as well as other similar intimations contained in the classical writers, we find proof that while, during the period in question, almost countless dialects, in addition to the native Latin, might have been heard among the vast and multifarious population of Rome, the various tribes there mixed together possessed in the language of Greece, then become the language of the world, a means whereby they could communicate with one another.”*

Such, then, being the linguistic condition of Italy at the time referred to, we are not surprised to find

* See my *Discussions on the Gospels*, p. 30 (2nd ed.), where the passages referred to are quoted in the originals.

that no need for a Latin version of Scripture was felt in that country for many generations after Christ. And, in fact, the first Latin translation did not arise in Italy at all. It had its origin in North Africa, where a knowledge of Greek, which certainly was at one time possessed, seems to have died out in the course of the second century.

Accordingly, it is from Tertullian, himself an African, and the earliest of the Latin Fathers, that we first hear of a version of Scripture in the proper language of the Romans. His words clearly imply that a popular Latin version of the Bible circulated in his day (about 200 A.D.) among the churches of Africa. This is known as the "Old Latin," and its formation may probably be dated about the middle of the second century. A goodly number of manuscripts of this version, more or less perfect, are still in existence, and testify to the peculiar Latin—vigorous and racy, but very different from that of the classical writers—in which it was composed.

So long as the old Latin version was confined to Africa, it seems to have remained substantially unchanged. But very different was its fate on being introduced into Italy. As the Greek language still continued to be pretty accurately and widely known in that country, corrections were naturally made on the old Latin: its errors were replaced by better renderings, and its provincial roughnesses were

smoothed and softened. At length a recension, known as "the Italian," was formed, and seems to have obtained some degree of authority over the others. But great embarrassment as to the Latin text continued to prevail. There was no standard to which a general appeal could be made, and the differences of rendering in the various copies were most perplexing and vexatious. At last, towards the close of the fourth century, a man was raised up by providence, who was eminently fitted for remedying this uncertainty and confusion.

That man was found in St. Jerome,* next to Origen the most learned of all the Fathers of the Church. Born in 329 A.D., he spent a very long life (died 420 A.D.) in the most devoted Biblical labours. Among his other vast undertakings was an improved translation into Latin of the sacred Scriptures. The discrepancies and corruptions which had been introduced into the various existing texts could no longer be tolerated; and, at the urgent request of Damasus, then Bishop of Rome, Jerome set himself to the work of correction. Having begun his work with the Gospels, he proceeded to the Old Testament, intending only at the first to amend the existing version which had been based upon the

* His full name was Eusebius Hieronymus Sophronius, but he is usually spoken of as St. Jerome. He was a native of Stridon in Dalmatia.

Septuagint. But after he acquired a knowledge of Hebrew, nothing would satisfy him but a translation direct from the original. This accordingly he prepared with great toil and care, and the work thus produced is, in substance, the Latin Vulgate, as in use by the Church of Rome at the present day.

Jerome, however, experienced the usual fate of reformers. His work, though a vast improvement on previous Latin versions, was bitterly assailed by his contemporaries, and for long lay comparatively neglected. It was not till some centuries afterwards that the new version completely supplanted the old, though it had steadily been winning its way to public favour. Gregory the Great, about the close of the sixth century, acknowledged that Jerome's translation was equally in use with the old Latin, and it was almost universally accepted in the course of another hundred years. As could not but happen, it too suffered much corruption in the course of time. It was revised oftener than once, until at last it assumed a printed form about A.D. 1455, being the first book that ever issued from the press.

As thus printed, the text of the Latin Vulgate was very far from pure. Nor was much done for it in the editions which followed, until the religious controversies of the sixteenth century directed special attention to the subject. The Council of Trent passed a decree on April 8th, 1546, bearing upon

the sacred Scriptures, but a considerable time elapsed before any practical step was taken towards securing an amended and authorised edition. At length, after various tentative efforts, a revised text of the Vulgate was put forth under the auspices of Pope Sixtus V. in 1590. But the imperious character of the Pope had led to the insertion of many false readings, and this edition, though issued under pontifical sanction, was soon felt to be eminently unsatisfactory. Various clumsy and disingenuous efforts were made by the popes immediately succeeding to account for and correct its errors, but a thorough revision of it did not take place till two years afterwards. In 1592, a decidedly improved text was issued by Clement VIII., and the Clementine text henceforth superseded, in the estimation of all competent judges, the Sixtine, as well as all previous editions of the Vulgate.

As thus issued and authorised, the *current* Latin Bible remains at the present day, no thoroughly critical edition having yet seen the light. Much still requires to be done before its own text can be regarded as satisfactory, or before its full value can be brought out as perhaps the most important means at our command for the final settlement of many critical questions connected with the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures. But taking it as it stands, the version bears undoubted witness to the substantial

accuracy of the received text of the Old Testament. One of its most remarkable discrepancies is found in Gen. iii. 15. As is well known, the Vulgate there reads *ipsa*, for *ipse*, so that the rendering of the passage into English must be, “*she* shall bruise thy head,” instead of that which is found in our Authorised Version. Every one knows that this rendering has been supposed to imply that there is a reference in the passage to the Virgin Mary. But there can be no doubt that it is a false translation of the Hebrew. The form of the pronoun is masculine in the original, and this is preserved in the Septuagint version. There seems to be even good reason to believe that the primitive reading in the Vulgate itself was *ipse*;^{*} and if so, it is much to be desired that the correct rendering should be restored, that one great cause of wrangling between Catholics and Protestants may be finally removed.

Before quitting the subject of the venerable Latin version, I desire to express my full concurrence in the following eloquent and generous words of Dr. Eadie:—“Yet, in spite of such points in its history,” referring to the many discrepancies between the Sixtine and Clementine editions, “the Vulgate has many claims for the place which it so long held, and

* See on this and other points connected with the Vulgate the exhaustive article of Canon Westcott in Smith’s *Dict. of the Bible*, iii. 1689 ff.

for the good which it so often effected. It was, in the absence of the original, the only accessible Bible in mediæval Western Europe,—‘a light shining,’ though with veiled lustre, ‘in a dark place.’ It did its appointed work, and brought peace and strength to many hearts, opening up to them a glimpse of the glorified One above and beyond the crucifix, creating a fulness of trust that felt no need of saintly mediation, nursing a loyalty to Him so intense and absorbing, that it looked down upon the keys of St. Peter as a paltry symbol, while it sustained a confidence in Him that hard dogma could not deaden, and an adoration of Him which a complicated and inflexible ritual could not petrify. The religious community, whose book it was, kept the Roman empire from falling into barbarism at its dissolution. In spite of its growing superstition and tyranny, the Western Church scattered round it many blessings. Music, painting, and architecture were fostered by it; the figured windows in the churches were the poor man’s Bible, where he saw in vivid group and colouring the power and pity of the Son of Mary. Its compact organization gave it a great power, which it often wielded for the good of society in days of ignorance and war. It broke the bonds of the serf, opened an asylum for the exile and outcast, restrained the fury of the oppressor, and softened the haughty rigour of the nobility. Grandees quailed before its ministers

invested with a superhuman authority which they were afraid to resist, and were unable to define, for its mastery stretched into the invisible world. The abbey was often a rebuke to the castle, and was an almshouse for the poor, a hospital for the sick, an inn for the traveller, and a retreat for the weary and forlorn in heart. Its farms presented the best specimens of tillage, and its blooming orchards were a reproof to all who loitered in the 'vineyard of the sluggard.' In the midst of many drawbacks, inconsistencies and errors, the Latin Church may glory in pointing to the heroic and self-denying toils and sufferings of its missionaries and martyrs, whose romantic lives are grander than fiction, and who met their death, not merely with saintly calmness, but prophetic exultation. Those noble souls were baptized with the Holy Spirit; the true unction filled them with a seraphic devoutness, which did not depend on a gorgeous service, with its music, incense, and images. The mystics, who had felt the power of the unseen, and were rapt into hidden communing with God, did not rest on a sacerdotal ministry. The Houses, especially of the Benedictine class, so magnificent in architecture, often and honestly strove in earlier times to realize the ideal of their founder. In them was conserved whatever of science or art was known; and in them was copied, for circulation, the Latin Bible, which preserved for

centuries the knowledge of the Gospel, and gave their first inspiration to the Reformers.”*

We now proceed to a brief consideration of other ancient translations of the Old Testament.

The *Æthiopic* version seems to have been formed not long after the introduction of Christianity into Abyssinia in the course of the fourth century. The Old Testament translation was made, not from the original Hebrew, but from the Greek version, and, when thoroughly investigated, will thus aid in the formation of a critical edition of the Septuagint. The author of it is totally unknown. He was evidently but an imperfect Greek scholar, as he frequently confounds words which are similar in form, but totally different in signification.

Two *Egyptian* versions, at least, were also formed certainly not later than the fourth century. By that time the Greek language, which was once so prevalent in Lower Egypt, appears to have died out, and the Scriptures were therefore translated into Coptic, the mother-tongue of the people. One version, now known as the Memphitic, circulated in Lower Egypt, and the other, which is styled the Thebaic, was prepared specially for the inhabitants of Upper Egypt. Some fragments of what has been deemed

* *The English Bible*, ii. 110.

a third version have also been discovered, but are of no importance. The Thebaic and Memphitic versions, however, are of great value for the purposes of criticism. They were formed independently of each other, but both from the Greek. Here, then, again are furnished valuable materials to assist in the preparation of that trustworthy edition of the Septuagint which does not yet exist, but which is, for many reasons, so earnestly to be desired.

We have next to notice the ancient and important *Gothic* version. More is known respecting its formation than is generally the case with the early translations of Scripture. Its author was the celebrated Bishop Ulphilas, who died in the year 388 A.D. It is said that he held Arian or semi-Arian views, but hardly a trace of doctrinal bias is to be found in what remains of his translation of the Scriptures. Unfortunately nothing more than fragments of the Old Testament have yet been discovered. The version was made from the Greek; and as its date is not later than the middle of the fourth century, it would form another valuable witness to the text of the Septuagint then current, were larger portions of it to be found. From what has already happened, such an event is not altogether hopeless. The late Cardinal Mai, on examining some palimpsest *

* This expression literally means what has been *scraped again*, and, as applied to manuscripts, denotes that an attempt has been

manuscripts, discovered that the Gothic version was the original writing over which the latter had been inscribed, and something similar may occur again, with perhaps larger results.

Of the *Armenian* version little requires to be said. It was not formed before the fifth century, since up to that period the Armenian Christians made use of the Syriac version. The first attempts at translation into the language of Armenia were based not on the Greek, far less on the Hebrew, but on the Syriac. Some Armenian delegates, however, attended the Œcumenical Council held at Ephesus in A.D. 431, and brought back with them copies of the Greek Scriptures. Efforts were then made to obtain a knowledge of the Greek language, and an Armenian version of the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament was ere long completed, the former unsatisfactory translations from the Syriac being set aside, although their influence may still be traced. The Latin Vulgate was also made use of in forming the Armenian version, but, to a considerable extent, it is possessed of an independent character.

Descending now to a considerably late date, we encounter the *Slavonic* version, which seems to have been formed, as a whole, in the course of the ninth century. With this may be classed the Arabic,

made to erase a first writing, that the parchment or paper might receive a second.

Persian, and Anglo-Saxon versions, none of which can be regarded as having much authority with respect to questions bearing on the original texts. Some of them were based on the Septuagint, and others on the Vulgate; but all are too modern to have much weight in determining the primitive readings of the versions from which they were formed.

It must be obvious, from what has been said in this chapter, how much yet remains to be done in connection with the text of the Old Testament. The early versions of it which were made require to be far more thoroughly investigated. Beginning with the Septuagint, which is, in many respects, the most interesting and important of all, an earnest effort must be made to establish its true text. As has been before suggested, this is one of the greatest *desiderata* in Biblical science, and whosoever accomplishes the task will perform a service of inestimable importance to the cause of sacred criticism. And then the same thing requires to be done with respect to the Syriac and Latin versions, not to speak of those less important authorities which have been mentioned.

Till these important preliminary processes have been accomplished, any amended version of the Old Testament can only be tentative and provisional.

As we shall see in the next chapter, our common English translation is the result of labours carried on by many different men, and with very various appliances and advantages. Means of improving upon it now certainly exist to a large extent, and will, no doubt, be diligently employed in the preparation of the forthcoming revised version. But much still remains to be done; and perhaps one of the most valuable effects flowing from the revision now in hand will be the stimulus it will give to scholars to enter zealously on those labours that have yet to be gone through in connection both with the text and the translation of the Old Testament.



CHAPTER XII.

ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

IT has appeared in the preceding chapters that there are not a few corrections which require to be made in the current English version of the Old Testament. In fact, there is probably not a single passage of more than a few verses in which a nearer or more accurate approach to the meaning of the original may not be made. This is not to be wondered at: the wonder rather is that such a high standard of general excellence was reached, considering the time and circumstances in which the version was formed. To these I shall now briefly direct the reader's attention.

It is stated on the title-page of the Authorised Version, that that version was "translated out of the original tongues." But that statement must be taken with some qualification. While the translators no doubt always had the original texts before them as they prosecuted their work, they nevertheless learnt very much on the results attained by those

who had preceded them. It has been correctly said, with respect to the work which they produced, that "former translations and comments, nearly twenty in number, were the real sources, not the original texts. Instead of the latter being the fountain, they furnished mere corrections of former versions. The translators' own words imply this: 'Truly, good Christian reader, we never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one, but to make a good one better, or of many good ones one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against: that hath been our endeavour, that our mark.'"^{*} Such being the state of the case, we must necessarily glance at those efforts which had been put forth to translate the Bible into English before the appearance of our present Authorised Version.

It is an interesting fact, that, at a very early period in the history of our country, attempts were made to translate portions of the Bible into the language of the people. Among those who laboured for this end, the names of the venerable Bede (died 735 A.D.) and the great King Alfred (died 901 A.D.) stand forth conspicuous. Bede is well known to have

^{*} Dr. Davidson *On a Fresh Revision of the English Old Testament*, p. 1.

died while dictating his translation of the last verses of St. John's Gospel, and of Alfred we are told that he set forth in the mother-tongue a version of part of the Book of Exodus (ch. xx.—xxiii.), while he expressed a desire that every one should be able to read the Scriptures in the then language of England. Indeed, he was credited in later traditions with having been a translator of the whole Bible.*

Various attempts at translating portions of Scripture into the language of the English people continued to be made. One of the most important of these is known as the *Ormulum*, and may be dated about the close of the twelfth century. It consists of 20,000 lines, embracing the Gospels and Acts in a kind of iambic verse, of which the two following lines from the dedication of the author, Orm, to his brother, may be given as a specimen:—

“Icc hafe wennd inntill Ennglissh
Goddspelless hallghe lore,”†

which may be thus represented in our modern speech:—

“I have turned into English
The Gospel's holy lore.”

Several other metrical versions of parts of Scripture

* Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, art. Auth. Vers., p. 1665.

† Eadie's *English Bible*, i. 30.

followed, and fragmentary prose translations still exist, which must be referred to much the same period

But it is not till we reach the times of JOHN WYCLIFFE (about A.D. 1360) that we meet with a complete translation of the Bible into the English language. This version of Wycliffe has attracted much attention, both from the circumstances in which it was produced, and from the inherent interest attaching to the work. It was in the face not only of much discouragement, but of great personal danger, that the devoted Rector of Lutterworth prosecuted and completed his vast undertaking. No law of the Church had, indeed, as yet been passed against vernacular translations. They had, on the contrary, been patronised by various papal authorities in high position. But Wycliffe was already a marked man before he entered on the work of translation. He had boldly protested against several of the corruptions of Romanism, and it seems marvellous that he escaped the fate of martyrdom. He was, however, in God's good providence, saved from that violent death which his bitter enemies would so gladly have seen inflicted upon him, and died peaceably at his rectory in 1384. But the spirit which the Church cherished towards him and his work was painfully evinced in

the next century, when the Council of Constance (1415) ordered his remains to be disinterred and burnt. This impotent and barbarous decree was actually carried out in 1428, and his ashes were cast into the streamlet Swift, which runs by the spot where his remains were burned. Upon this the Church historian, Fuller, has happily remarked, in well-known words, "Thus this brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."

Wycliffe's translation was, of course, made from the Vulgate. A striking proof of this is furnished in Gen. iii. 15. Wycliffe's version there has, "*She* shall trede thy head," thus adopting the false rendering of the Latin, which, against both the original Hebrew and the Septuagint version, refers the bruising of the serpent's head to the *woman*, instead of her seed. In fact, Wycliffe probably knew little or no Greek, and certainly no Hebrew. But his work is nevertheless possessed of great merit. Its dialect is the Midland English, which, being used also by Chaucer, became the standard of our tongue. In style he is racy and striking, while the general air of his version is dignified, in spite of its seeming quaintness and familiarity. Nor is Wycliffe difficult to read, even at the present day. As Dr.

Eadie has remarked, "One is surprised to see how, when Wycliffe's work is modernized in spelling, it so closely resembles subsequent translations in the general aspect of the version, in the flow and position of the words, in the distinctive terms and connecting particles, in the rhythm of its clauses and the mould of its sentences. Several of its phrases must have passed early into the language, especially those which, from their currency, had acquired a kind of proverbial power, such as 'strait gate' and 'narrow way' (Matt. vii. 14), 'beam' and 'mote' (ver. 3), and being adopted by Tyndale, they have kept their place unto this present." * A few examples of Wycliffe's phraseology may be added. He uses the verb "comfort" in its original sense of "to strengthen." Thus we find in Isa. xli. 7, the rendering, "And he comforted him (the idol spoken of) with nailes," while in Phil. iv. 13 we have, "I may alle thingis in Him that comforteth me." He uses the verb "nappen" for "to sleep:" thus his rendering of Ps. cxxi. 4 is, "He shall not nappe, ne slepen." And not unfrequently, it may be remarked, Wycliffe uses forms which still exist in Scotch, though they have died out in English. Thus he has "gett" for "gate," "tak tent" for "take heed," and "toun" for "piece of ground,"

* *English Bible*, i. 72

as in Luke xiv. 18, "I have bought a toun," the *toun* being still a familiar expression in some parts of Scotland for a farm-house and its surroundings. In many such cases, it appears from Wycliffe's version that what have often been deemed Scotch corruptions really preserve the original form of the words more accurately, with respect both to sound and sense, than does modern English.

We now pass on to WILLIAM TYNDALE, the greatest of all the translators of our English Bible. He was born in 1477, and studied both at Oxford and Cambridge, having been attracted probably to the latter University by the presence at it of Erasmus from 1509 to 1514. From a comparatively early age, the life of Tyndale was devoted to the great work of Bible translation. His high ambition was to bring about such a state of matters that "a boy that driveth the plough" should become better acquainted with the Scriptures than the majority of the clergy had up till then been. He was excellently prepared for the work to which, with an unflagging enthusiasm, he dedicated his existence. Not only was he a good classical scholar, but in addition to an acquaintance with Greek, he possessed a considerable knowledge of the Hebrew language. He thus occupied this position of advantage over Wycliffe, that he could translate directly from the

original. And it is obvious that, while he availed himself of all the helps he could command, he never servilely adopted any previous renderings, but carefully compared them, for his own guidance, with the sacred text. Tyndale's first care was given to the New Testament. The translation of that portion of Scripture was finished and printed at Cologne and Worms about 1525. Vast numbers of these and other editions were speedily brought over to England, where, however, by order of the popish authorities, multitudes of copies were committed to the flames. But Tyndale possessed in the printing press a valuable ally unknown to any previous translator of the Bible in English. While the number of the copies of Wycliffe's version which still exist shows that even it must have been very widely circulated, the art of printing, of course, was far more effective in securing constant reproduction than could be the process of transcription. Accordingly, though bonfires of Tyndale's New Testament were made in this country, fresh supplies were constantly sent from abroad, and were largely circulated among the people.

Meanwhile the author was busily preparing a translation of the Old Testament. As need not be said, this was at that time a very formidable task. It would, indeed, have been comparatively easy to take the Vulgate and translate it into English

But such was not the plan of Tyndale. He meant to furnish a version direct from the original, and he set about this in the absence of any trustworthy Hebrew grammar or lexicon, and without any one to aid him in his anxious labour. It was a noble effort, even though it could not prove altogether successful. Tyndale did not possess that minute acquaintance with the Hebrew or the cognate tongues, which might have secured an approach to absolute accuracy in the version which he produced ; nor was he permitted to finish the work in which he had engaged. It is certain that he had completed his translation of the Pentateuch, and probable that he had proceeded as far as the end of Second Chronicles with the historical books, when, by the treachery of a professed friend, he was betrayed into the hands of the papal authorities at Antwerp. Having been at once conveyed to the castle of Vilvorde, situated some eighteen miles from Brussels, he was there kept a close prisoner for more than a year. At length a body of ecclesiastics was appointed to try his case, among whom were some divines of Louvain, who had only a few years before sent a letter of congratulation to the Archbishop of St. Andrews in Scotland, when Patrick Hamilton was in 1528 burned at the stake. The issue of a trial conducted by such men could not be doubtful, and Tyndale was accordingly

condemned to death. On the 6th of October, 1536, having, there is reason to believe, first been strangled—and in so far more mercifully dealt with than had been the youthful Scottish martyr—his body was reduced to ashes. As is well known, his last fervent utterance, the moment before death, consisted of these earnest words,—“Lord, open the king of England’s eyes.”*

The pre-eminent merits of Tyndale’s work are universally admitted at the present day. To it more than to any other is our Authorised Version indebted for the happy renderings and prevailing melody which belong to it. “From first to last,” as has been well said, “his style and his interpretation are his own; and in the originality of Tyndale is included, in a large measure, the originality of our English version. For not only did Tyndale contribute to it, directly, the substantial basis of half of the Old Testament (in all probability), and of the whole of the New, but he established a standard of Biblical translation which others followed. It is even of less moment that by far the greater part of his translation remains intact in our present Bibles, than that his

* The writer of the art. “Authorised Version,” in Smith’s *Dictionary of the Bible*, says that these words were uttered by Tyndale “as the *axe* was about to fall,” but it is certain that the martyr was not beheaded. (See *Life of Tyndale* by Demaus, p. 481.)

spirit animates the whole.”* Again, it has been remarked, “All the exquisite grace and simplicity which have endeared the Authorised Version to men of the most opposite tempers and contrasted opinions—to J. H. Newman and J. A. Froude—is due mainly to his clear-sighted truthfulness. The desire to make the Bible a people’s book led him in one edition to something like a provincial rather than a national translation, but on the whole it kept him free from the besetting danger of the time, that of writing for scholars, not for the people ; of a version full of ‘ink-horn’ phrases, not in the spoken language of the English nation. And throughout there is the pervading stamp, so often wanting in other like works, of the most thorough truthfulness. No word has been altered to court a king’s favour, or please bishops, or make out a case for or against a particular opinion. He is working freely, not in the fetters of prescribed rules. With the most entire sincerity he could say, ‘I call God to record, against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus Christ to give a reckoning of our doings, that I never altered one syllable of God’s Word against my conscience, nor would this day, if all that is in the world, whether it be pleasure, honour, or riches, might be given me.’”†

* Westcott’s *History of the English Bible*, p. 211.

† Smith’s *Dict. of Bible*, Auth. Vers.

The translation of the Scriptures prepared and published by MILES COVERDALE next calls for notice. Although both Henry VIII. and his bishops were determinately set against giving any countenance to Tyndale's version, yet, as we have seen, many copies of it had been clandestinely imported into the kingdom, and had excited a strong desire among the people at large, that an authorised English translation should be issued. For the execution of this important work, Coverdale, a friend of Cromwell, afterwards made Earl of Essex, was selected. The personal character of Coverdale was, in every respect, excellent and attractive, but he had no pretensions to great force of mind or depth of erudition. Unlike Tyndale, he seems to have been little, if it all, acquainted with Greek or Hebrew, and was content to make his version from the German and the Latin. His first edition came out in 1535, but met with no favour. Having been printed abroad, probably at Zurich, it was suspected of the taint of heresy, and lay neglected. Its flattering dedication to King Henry did not help it into favour the less, perhaps, because coupled with his name is that of the unfortunate Anne Boleyn, who is described as his "dearest, just wife, and most virtuous princess." This mistake, however, was speedily corrected, and the name of Queen Anne exchanged for that of Queen Jane. A second edition, published in 1537,

obtained the royal sanction; Henry, after being assured by the bishops that it contained no heresies, having exclaimed, "Let it, then, in God's name, go abroad among our people." The version of Coverdale, in one of its parts, is still very familiar to Englishmen, having formed the basis of that translation of the Psalms which is read in the Prayer Book of the Church of England.* The style of the work is animated and idiomatic, and, as has been justly said, "No little of that indefinable quality that gives popular charm to our English Bible, and has endeared it to so many generations, is owing to Coverdale. . . . Tyndale gave us the first great outline, distinctly and wonderfully etched, but Coverdale added those minuter touches which soften and harmonize it. The characteristic features are Tyndale's in all their boldness of form and expression, the more delicate lines and shadings are the contribution of his successor, both in his own version and in the Great Bible revised and edited by him."†

A few quaint renderings, out of many collected by Dr. Eadie, may be quoted from the version of Coverdale. In Gen. viii. 11, he has, "And she (the dove) bare it in her *nebb*"—this last word

* See afterwards, under Great Bible.

† Eadie's *English Bible*, i. 302.

being now in use only among the lower classes in Scotland. In Job xviii. 1, the patriarch is made to say, "I am hard at *deathes dore*," a metaphor which is also still to be heard among the Scottish peasantry. In Psa. xci. 5, we find the words which now sound to us so strangely,—“Thou shalt not need to be afraid of eny *bugges* by night;” and in Jer. viii. 52, we read, “There is no *triale* in Galaad,” the word “triale” (our “treacle”) being used in the sense of “ointment,” having originally denoted in Greek a medicinal compound used as an antidote against the bites of wild beasts, and gradually assuming the various significations of “healing unguent,” and “remedy” in general, until it became restricted in our language to the meaning it bears at the present day.

Another English version of the Scriptures appeared in 1537, bearing the name of THOMAS MATTHEW. Since no one of this name is conspicuous in the history of the period, scholars are generally agreed that the real editor of the work was the celebrated John Rogers, the first martyr under the reign of Queen Mary. The translation consisted simply of a combination of what had been previously done by Tyndale and Coverdale. But, strangely enough, the work obtained the sanction of Henry VIII., and a copy was ordered to be got by every church, the

cost being divided between the clergy and the laity of the parish. Thus the Bible of Matthew, or Rogers, became, in fact, the first authorised version. It is strange to think that in this way Tyndale's work, after having been so severely condemned, secured royal and national recognition. As has been strikingly said in regard to the compilation made by Rogers, "Two-thirds of Matthew's Bible are Tyndale's, and one-third is Coverdale's. Tyndale had done his work 'in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses;' his name had been 'cast out as evil;' King Henry had hated him; Sir Thomas More had employed all his learning, eloquence, and wit to hold up his version to malediction and scorn; Cromwell had frowned upon him; Tunstall had made a goodly bonfire of his volumes; Longland's heart had been rejoiced by the secret simultaneous search for them in the capital and the two universities; Stokesley had sent men to the flames for reading them; the translator himself had been proscribed, 'Judasly betrayed' by English agents, and burned; but in less than a year after his martyrdom his translation acquired the royal right of free sale and dispersion, having been mysteriously accepted as forming the larger portion of an authorised version for the English people." *

* Eadie, i. 324.

One Richard Taverner, a good Greek scholar, published in 1539 a revised edition of Matthew's Bible, but this work had not much influence on subsequent revisions of the English Bible. Rogers himself, the real Matthew, seems to have been a man of the most dauntless character. It is recorded that having been condemned to die by fire, he slept peacefully throughout the night preceding his execution, and was only awakened after "much shogging." Being informed that he had to die that day, he calmly remarked, "Then I need not tye my points;" and, after an affecting meeting with his wife and children on his way to the stake, he met his terrible doom in the most triumphant spirit, "waving his hand," says Foxe, "in the flame, as though it had been cold water."

What is known as THE GREAT BIBLE sometimes bears the name of Cranmer, although that illustrious archbishop and martyr seems to have had little or nothing to do with it beyond giving it his sanction. It is also at times referred to as Whitchurch's Bible: such, for instance, is its name in the instructions given by James VI. to his revisers. Whitchurch was simply one of the printers of the first edition: he afterwards married the widow of Cranmer. The name of "the Great Bible" was given to it from its size, as it was far larger than any of the other

editions, its pages measuring over fifteen inches in length, and over nine inches in breadth. The text of this Bible is, in substance, a revision of that of Matthew, with many modifications suggested by the Latin version of Erasmus. The work was done by Coverdale, who was ever ready to correct and improve what had already passed under his hand. It was in 1539 that the first edition of the Great Bible was published, and another with some changes came out in 1541. This Bible was very popular, and continued to be the "authorised version" of England till 1568,* the years of Mary's reign being, of course, excepted. This accounts for the fact that most, if not all, of the passages of Scripture contained in the English Prayer-books of 1549 and 1552 were taken from this edition. The Psalms still stand in the Book of Common Prayer as the Great Bible presented them; for though, in the revision which took place in 1662, the Gospels and Epistles were conformed to the present Authorised Version, the Psalms were left unchanged, the reason assigned being that "the choirs were accustomed to the old Psalter, and its

* As Doctor Eadie has remarked, "In the strict sense it is the only authorised version still; for the Bishops' Bible and the present Bible never had the formal sanction of royal authority." (i. 383.)

language was considered more smooth and fit for song.” *

There next falls to be noticed the once very popular GENEVA VERSION. This translation was the work of some of those exiles who were driven from England during the reign of Mary. The more rigid section of them had betaken themselves to Geneva, and there they set about the preparation of a fresh revision of the Scriptures. Several reasons led them to enter on this task. For one thing, the Great Bible was too large and costly for common use. It was also too colourless as respected doctrine, having no expository or dogmatic notes. The Genevan exiles therefore commenced a translation of their own, which should be practically more convenient, and doctrinally should utter no “uncertain sound.” They were well qualified for the work in which they engaged. Whittingham, whose scholarship was well known, acted as editor, and he was supported by such able coadjutors as Sampson, Gilby, Goodman, and Coverdale himself, who has already been frequently referred to in connection

* Eadie's *English Bible*, i. 386. It is interesting to know that this translation anticipates in substance the rendering of 2 Tim. iii. 16, which has been adopted in the revised version — “All Scripture given by inspiration of God is also profitable,” etc.

with earlier versions of the English Bible. Besides these, John Knox and other well-known men of the period have sometimes been named as having had a part in the work. Moreover, the translators doubtless availed themselves of the labours of Calvin, Beza, and other learned men then resident at Geneva, who had long been familiar with the study of Scripture. The men who had probably most to do with the formation of the version were the editor, William Whittingham,* a man of eminent learning, who was afterwards, for sixteen years, dean of Durham; Thomas Sampson, distinguished as an able Hebrew scholar; and Anthony Gilby, afterwards rector of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and author of a commentary on some of the minor prophets. They were engaged on their work "for two years or more, day and night." The New Testament was first issued by itself in 1557, and then the whole Bible in 1560. The completed work was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth.

There is no question as to the great merits of the Genevan version. It rested on Tyndale's version and the Great Bible, but often departs from both, generally for the better. The popularity which it at once secured was long retained. In fact, our

* Dr. Eadie is, for once, in error when he states (ii. 5) that Whittingham married the sister of John Calvin. It has been proved that he married the sister of Calvin's wife. (See Stoughton's *Our English Bible*, p. 190.)

present authorised version only gained slowly upon it. In Scotland especially, the Genevan Bible was highly prized, both for its own merits, and as having proceeded from a place which was almost deemed sacred, as well as from the hands of men for whom the greatest veneration was cherished. It was not till about the Restoration that the Genevan Bible* was entirely superseded by the Authorised Version.

We have now to glance at what is known as THE BISHOPS' BIBLE, which was first issued in 1568. The reason for preparing it was good and sufficient. When Elizabeth succeeded to the throne in 1558, the English Bible, which had been forbidden to be read during the five years and four months of the reign of Mary, was again allowed a free circulation. But it existed in many different forms. The Great Bible was re-established by the Queen as the authorised version, but the Genevan version was greatly preferred by the people, and the versions of Tyndale and Coverdale were also in circulation. It was natural that, in these circumstances, a desire should be felt for yet another version, which might, by its

* The Genevan version is sometimes spoken of as "The Breeches Bible," from its rendering of Gen. iii. 7, "They sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves breeches." But the word "breeches" had already been used by Wycliffe.

superior merits, unite the great body of Englishmen in its favour, and so supersede all the rest. Archbishop Parker, then at the head of the English Church, was very zealous in the prosecution of this object, and was strenuously supported by a number of the most learned among the bishops. The archbishop himself undertook a large part of the work, while the remaining books were assigned to men of acknowledged erudition. From the fact that most of the translators were bishops, this version received the name of the Bishops' Bible, and great efforts were made in various ways that it might prove a decided success.

Failure, nevertheless, attended it. "Of all the English versions," it has been said, "the Bishops' Bible had probably the least success. It did not command the respect of scholars, and its size and cost were far from meeting the wants of the people. Its circulation appears to have been practically limited to the churches which were ordered to be supplied with it."* The Bishops' Bible professed to be a revision of the Great Bible, and did very largely adopt its renderings; but it originated some happy expressions of its own, which still survive, such as "middle wall" and "fellow-citizens" (Eph. ii. 14, 19), and "less than the least" (Eph. iii. 8),

* Smith's *Dict. of Bible*, iii. 1675.

all of which have a place in our present Authorised Version.*

We enter a different region altogether when we now turn to THE RHEIMS AND DOUAI VERSION. This translation of the Scriptures was formed under Roman Catholic auspices. Sorely against the general feeling of the Romish Church, it was extorted by the pressure of circumstances, in order to counteract the evil which was being done by what were called the *corrupt* Protestant versions. It was, of course, based upon the Latin Vulgate as being "authentic," and as really having in the Papal Church a practical superiority assigned to it over the Greek and Hebrew originals. Like the Genevan Bible, the version now under remark was the work of English exiles. Many Romanists left England when Elizabeth succeeded to the throne, and a number of these settled at Douai, in Flanders, in 1568. There a seminary for the education of priests was established, but being broken up, it found refuge at Rheims, in France; returning, however, to Douai in 1593. It was at Rheims that the New Testament was published in 1582. The chief translators were Gregory Martin, who was reputed "an excellent linguist," and William Allen, who was afterwards made a cardinal, and was intended to be the Romish Primate

* Eadie's *Eng. Bib.*, ii. 92.

of England, had the Spanish Armada met with success. The Old Testament, though ready even before the New, was kept back "for lack of good meanes," and only came out at Douai in 1609-10.

The English of this version is of a very peculiar character. As Fuller has remarked, "the translation needs to be translated." The following are a few specimens of its renderings:—Deut. xvi. 2, "Thou shalt immolate the Phasc to our Lord thy God;" Ps. iv. 6, "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us;" Ps. xxiii. 5, "Thou hast fatted my head with oil, and my chalice inebriating, how goodlie is it;" Isa. xiii. 22, "And the Syrach owls shall answer, and mermaids in the temples of pleasure;" Luke xxii. 18, "I will not drink of the generation of the vine;" 1 Cor. v. 7, "Purge the old leaven, that ye may be a new paste, as you are Azymes;" Gal. vi. 1, "If a man be preoccupied in any fault;" Rev. i. 10, "Dominical day;" Rev. xxii. 17, "Let him take the water of life gratis."

Yet, while admitting multitudes of such absurd renderings, the Rhenist translators struck out not a few happy expressions, which still live in our Authorised Version. Among these may be mentioned "hymn" in Matt. xxvi. 30; "decease" in Luke ix. 31; "commendeth" in Rom. v. 8; "bridleth his tongue" in James i. 26; and a considerable number of others.

We now come to the *AUTHORISED VERSION*—the inheritor of the excellences of all the preceding English translations. This version, which has so long and so happily been the representative of the sacred Scriptures in our language, may almost be said to have resulted from a seeming accident. Some words, uttered apparently without previous intention, fell from the lips of Dr. Reynolds, at the famous Hampton Court Conference in 1604, as to the desirability that a new translation of the Bible should be prepared. This proposal at once commended itself to King James, as being quite in the line of his own predilection for Biblical and theological studies. Ere long, therefore, the seed which had been casually dropped germinated and produced fruit. Within a few months, the king wrote to Bancroft, then Archbishop of Canterbury, that he had appointed a body of fifty-four scholars to carry the idea of a new translation into effect. Forty-seven were soon actually at work. Many of these men were well known as admirably qualified for the great work which lay before them. Some of them, indeed, such as Andrewes, Overall, and Kilbye, were among the most learned men of a very learned age. They were instructed not to aim at an absolutely new translation, but to take the Bishops' Bible as their basis, and subject it to a thorough revision by every means at their command. Now, the Bishops' Bible,

it will be remembered, was itself a revision of the Great Bible, and that again a revision of Matthew's Bible, which was, in fact, a combination of Coverdale's and Tyndale's translations; so that our Authorised Version is genetically connected with all the previous English versions which had been made directly from the original Scriptures.

There is no need to dwell on the excellence of the result. Eulogies innumerable, and hardly one of them exaggerated, have been passed on our English Bible. The very fact that it has reigned without a rival so long is a sufficient proof of its superiority. Especially does this strike one when the thought recurs, that so many translations preceded it within a very limited period. In less than a century, all the versions enumerated above had been ushered into the world, and had seriously contested each other's claims to be generally accepted as the standard English Bible; while, during the two centuries and a half which have now fully elapsed since the Authorised Version was formed, no rival, that had the slightest chance of successfully competing with it, has entered the field; and it still stands supreme at the present day.

Is there, then, no need for a revised version? Marvellous indeed would it be, if such were the case. Has Biblical learning made no progress in the course of the last 270 years? and have no

changes taken place in our own language during that long period, which call for a revised version of our English Bible? Having in a previous work* answered these questions as respects the New Testament, I shall now, in a few words, glance at them in their bearing upon the Old.

Sufficient proof has been brought forward, in some of the preceding chapters, that there are many passages in the authorised version of the Old Testament which admit of being more accurately translated. To these multitudes of others might be easily added. Hebrew and the cognate languages have been zealously and fruitfully studied since 1611; and the meaning of the original is now, to a large extent, better understood. The natural-history terms, which occur so largely in the Pentateuch, may, in particular, be here referred to as of themselves amply justifying and calling for a revision.

And then let us look at the number of obsolete expressions to be found in the Old Testament. Page after page might be filled with lists of these. Among them occur the following, in addition to those formerly mentioned: bosses, taches, knops, habergeon, tablet, botch, silverling, wimple, etc., and such phrases as "make a road" (for *raid*), "evil occur-

* *Companion to the Revised English Version of the New Testament.* Cassell, Petter, Galpin and Co.

rent" (for *coming against*), "dissolving doubts" (for *resolving*), "woe worth the day,"* and many such others. It may be doubted if one English reader out of a hundred attaches any meaning, or, at least, anything like the correct one, to these words and phrases; and they ought therefore, beyond all doubt, to be exchanged for others that are more generally intelligible.

All that seems necessary has already been said in connection with the text of the Old Testament. No changes of any great importance require to be made in the translation in consequence of alterations in the text which have as yet been demanded by the progress of Biblical science. The revision of the Old Testament differs greatly in this respect from that of the New. There is no passage in the Hebrew Scriptures analogous, as regards change or omission of text required, to 1 Tim. iii. 16, and 1 John v. 7, 8. And there is also one other great difference between

* This idiom has, indeed, survived to our own day, as in Sir Walter Scott's lines in *The Lady of the Lake*:—

worth the chase, woe worth the day
That cost thy life, my gallant grey!"

But though most readers may have a vague idea of the meaning, probably few know that *worth* simply stands for *is*, being connected with the German *werden*, so that the import of "woe worth the day" is just "woeful is the day."

the two revisions. While the essential meaning of the Greek has only in a very few places been missed by our common English translation, it will, beyond doubt, be found that positive mistakes in that version, as to the real signification of Hebrew words and phrases, have given rise to the great majority of the differences perceptible between its renderings and those of the revised version of the Old Testament.

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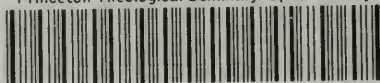
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